WARBECK.

VOL. II.

THE King of England, weary with having ſo many enemies to contend with, reſolved to ſtrive to bring over the Scottiſh monarch to his intereſts: the arrival of Don Pedro d'Ayala, the Spaniſh Ambaſſador, at the court of London, ſeemed to promiſe him a fit opportunity for the execution of his deſign. That miniſter was charged with the negociation of a marriage between the Infanta Catharine, daughter of Ferdinand and Iſabella, and Arthur, Prince of Wales. No man could poſſeſs talents more ſuitable for accompliſhing a peace between the two Kings than Don Pedro: he was gentle and inſinuating in his manners, and had the art to conceal the depth of his political views under an exterior appearance of affability and candour. He repairs to Edinburgh, and in ſeveral private conferences with the King is fully inſtructed in every particular relative to the pretended Duke of York. By this Spaniſh mediator Henry abſolutely inſiſted that his enemy ſhould be delivered into his hands: this was the firſt article of the treaty.

James

James ſends for the Duke.—You cannot doubt, ſaid the monarch to him, of the extreme deſire I have to be of ſervice to you, ſo far even as to place the crown of England on your head:—I have adopted you into my family, as your wife is my relation; in a word, I regard you as a Prince of my own blood: But the King of France has ſet me an example worthy to be followed by every mortal called to a throne. Neither friends, relations, or any object but the ſtate alone, ſhould influence the actions of a Sovereign: he is, as it were, a victim always ready to be ſacrificed to the welfare of his ſubjects. We are envied: Alas! is it for ourſelves we live or love? You inſpired me with an attachment of which you have received ſingular proofs: I am now obliged to preſcribe bounds to them. But I have promiſed you, and I will keep my royal word, that, whoever you are, I am incapable of abandoning you to the fate that continually perſecutes you. The King of England offers me an advantageous peace. I have already ſaid, it is not for myſelf that I reign, but for a people who have entruſted me with the care of their intereſts: I therefore accept a peace ſo neceſſary. Henry inſiſted on your being deliv red to his ambaſſador: it is here that I reconcile my duty with my generoſity. I permit you to leave my kingdom; my favours ſhall follow you wherever you go; ſhips;—money;—every thing,

thing, in ſhort, on my part, is at your diſpoſal.

The Duke of York replies, with an air of dignity which gave an irreſiſtible charm to every word:—Sire, you ſhall never hear a ſingle murmur eſcape from my lips: It is long that I ought to be accuſtomed to act the unfortunate; the miſerable, alas! are not formed for friendſhip! I had thought, it is true, that Heaven had diſtinguiſhed you in my favour from other Princes; that you were affected with my misfortunes; that my benefactor would never be tired with ſupporting me, ſo lively was my gratitude! Beſides, I imagined that you would always deign to regard in me a wife who has the honour of being related to you. Reaſons of ſtate deprive me of the continuation of your declared protection. I reſpect, Sire, thoſe reaſons, contrary as they are to ſentiment. I ſhall not pretend to determine how far it is the duty of a Sovereign to obey a cruel policy, which proſcribes an unfortunate Prince, excludes him from every aſylum, and may perhaps force him and his conſort, that Princeſs of your blood, to ſink under the weight of their ſorrows, to ſuffer every humiliation which attends adverſity. But, in the preſent moment, I would only ſpeak of your favours, and of my gratitude, which ſhall follow me to the grave. Promiſe me only that if, yielding to my unhappy deſtiny, I die overcome by my misfortunes, you will

think on my wife. Ah, that image is to me the height of miſery! You weep, Sire: your tears penetrate my ſoul.—Judge of my feelings, replies the King, embracing him;—go;—if you are not a Prince, you are at leaſt worthy of being one.

The Duke of York informs the Ducheſs of this freſh ſtroke of ill fortune, and that he is only a few days to remain in Scotland. What aſylum could he now hope for? If he went to the Netherlands, his diſgraces would only meet the contempt of the Flemings, whoſe intereſts prohibited his return into their country, and they were in ſome ſort re-united with his enemies. In this conjuncture, the Ducheſs of Burgundy could only offer him an uſeleſs protection.

Inſtead of anſwering her huſband, the unhappy Princeſs flies with him to the King's apartment. Her diſhevelled treſſes, the agitation of her mind, the negligence of her dreſs, all contributed to augment her charms: the majeſty of grief manifeſted itſelf on her face in all its power. She enters, and with a torrent of tears precipitates herſelf at the monarch's feet. Could you then reſolve, Sire, to ſtifle the voice of honour, of humanity, to hearken to an impious policy, which violates all laws, breaks through every tie, and renders you forgetful that I am ſprung from the ſame blood with yourſelf? After having opened your friendly boſom to the unfortunate

Duke

Duke of York, would you baniſh him from your dominions? His rights, his dignity, his misfortunes, which implore your pity, and which form the tendereſt claim on a heart like yours,—will nothing melt you, and engage you to complete a work which you had ſo happily begun? I will ſay nothing to you of the ſacred ties which unite me to the Duke of York, which render me the companion of his deſtiny; ſtill more ſo in his diſtreſſes than in his proſperity: that union, which has proved ſo fatal to the Prince, was formed by you; and you are not ignorant, Sire, in how criminal a light it is regarded by the Engliſh: the portion which I bring him is a conſtant ſource of unhappineſs; the loſs of the aſſiſtance he might have hoped from a people born to obey him; and finally the loſs of your kindneſs, when he was forſaken by all the world.

The King interrupts the Ducheſs to aſſure her, that they might always rely on his affection, and that they ſhould always receive teſtimonies of it wherever Fate ſhould drive them; adding, that he was forced to ſubmit to neceſſity, to the welfare of the ſtate; and that it was entirely againſt his inclination to part from the Prince her huſband. The ſacrifice, continued he, will coſt me leſs pain if you will follow my advice; and I imagine that the Duke of York will join his intreaties with mine. The cruel policy, which con-

ſtrains me at this moment, does not however deny me the conſolation of retaining you in my Court: you ſhall ſtay with me till the Duke has ſettled his affairs, and attained a ſituation in which he may ſecure you a retreat, where at leaſt you may enjoy tranquillity. Alas! interrupted haſtily the Duke, let my dear wife remain in Edinburgh: may ſhe be happy,—whilſt I alone encounter the aſſaults of my inflexible deſtiny! I conſent... Hold, cries the Ducheſs, I know my duty; I know my love. My dear huſband, it is our hearts that bind us to each other, and not merely a ceremony ordained by the laws; let us therefore be united in misfortune. Nothing but death can divide us, and I would even ſhare the grave: yes, I will die with thee, and my aſhes ſhall mix with thine. Sire, continued ſhe, in pronouncing his doom you have pronounced mine.

The monarch mingles his tears with thoſe of the Ducheſs; he kindly embraced her; but was unable to effect any change in her reſolution: all he could ſay to them, in the midſt of the tears that flowed from him, was only this:—Alas! I am a King!

James had however the generoſity to conceal from the Ducheſs of York, as well as from her huſband, the reaſons which determined him to diſmiſs them: he was well acquainted with the true birth of Warbeck; and yet he entertained at times ſome doubts

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on the ſubject; ſo thoroughly was this youth endued with the talent of acting the character he was induced to perſonate!

We now find them on board the veſſel provided for them. The Ducheſs, oppreſſed with a profound ſorrow, fixed her eyes inceſſantly on her native ſhore;—it diſappears from her ſight. It is all over then, exclaimed the unhappy Princeſs;—no more ſhall I direct my eager looks to thee, cruel, inhuman country! I renounce for ever the place which gave me birth; I am eternally divorced from Scotland; I will not even demand from it a grave: Come, dear Prince, be every thing to me,—family, country, life; I forget them all, or rather I find them, I love them in you alone. Though we ſhould be baniſhed to the end of the world, to a deſart iſland, to a frightful cavern; let me only live and die by your ſide, and I will not accuſe my deſtiny.

Frion had taken leave of his pupil to return to the Ducheſs of Burgundy: the younger Aſtley alone followed his friend, influenced more by his attachment to our illuſtrious adventurer to continue ſtedfaſt in his party, than by any motives of intereſt which might have appeared at firſt to engage him to embrace it.

Their departure from Scotland confirmed the peace between James and Henry, which was guarantied by Ferdinand and Iſabella, under the auſpices of their miniſter, Don Pedro:

Pedro: it was ſuppoſed that he had alſo begun a treaty of marriage between Margaret, daughter of the King of England, and the monarch of Scotland.

The two fugitives met with a happy voyage. The Duke of York had reſolved to retire a ſecond time into Ireland, hoping that a freſh attempt on a country ſo diſpoſed to revolt would prove more ſucceſsful.—Whenever his eyes were fixed on his wife, the diſtraction of his mind vented itſelf in inarticulate lamentations; while her innocent careſſes ſerved only to augment the ſorrows that conſumed him. —In her preſence he ſuppreſſed his tears, but they found a free courſe in the boſom of his friend:—Aſtley, what is my deſtiny! alas! how horrible! and how will it terminate?—Forſaken by all, by France, by Flanders, by Scotland,—drawing after me an unhappy victim,—that makes me feel much more ſeverely the ſecret torments which rend my heart. To what will this deception at laſt conduct me?—it already weighs but too heavily upon me. I have cruelly impoſed on a lady of the moſt illuſtrious deſcent, who is beauty, ſentiment, virtue itſelf; my ſweeteſt friend; my ſovereign miſtreſs: and it is not enough for me to ſuffer a tragical end, without involving her in my deſtruction!—Aſtley, I cannot bear the dreadful idea!—But it is that idea, interrupted Aſtley, which ought to arm you with an unſhaken conſtancy. It

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is not now a time to give way to remorſe as fruitleſs as it is unſeaſonable: think that you are the huſband of the Counteſs of Huntley, who is the near relation of a monarch; that ſhe is worthy of a crown; that the ſon of Owen had but little more right to it than yourſelf; and that you may eaſily expiate this artifice, by governing England as a great King.—Perſuade yourſelf then that you are really the ſon of Edward IV: there are ſome deceptions that are uſeful; this will lead you to glory, to the tranſcendent pleaſure, ſo flattering to you, of placing your conſort in the elevated rank to which ſhe is entitled.—The Duke replies: ſhould Fortune, my conſtant enemy, continue to fight againſt me; ſhould I be detected, ſhould the myſtery be revealed, what will the unfortunate Princeſs ſay?—Heroes and lovers, replies Aſtley, with warmth, muſt never imagine obſtacles; fear and deſpondency are inmates only of vulgar ſouls;——ſuffer nothing to appear before your eyes but the beautiful object of your adoration, and you will command the ſmiles of Fortune.

Succeſs confirms the generous ardour with which Aſtley had fired the mind of his friend: ſome ſparkles blaze into a flame from the embers which Henry believed to be extinguiſhed. In vain did he ſeem to ſoften the natural ſeverity and gloom of his diſpoſition; the clemency which he had manifeſted towards the

the inſurgents in Cornwall appeared to them rather as the effect of his weakneſs than of the mildneſs of his temper: they called for a new chief to lead them on.

The Duke of York, landing on the Iriſh coaſt, learns that the rebellion is rekindled: his friends and partiſans preſent themſelves to him; he receives a deputation from the male-contents, with the offer of the command of an army, which wanted nothing but his preſence to march againſt Henry. The Duke joyfully accepts the propoſal, and flies to join them. They inform him, that he had committed a capital fault in confiding in the Ducheſs of Burgundy, and the Kings of France and Scotland, whoſe intereſts required the ſacrifice of his own, that he was miſtaken in his politics when he hazarded a deſcent on the coaſt of Kent, bordering too nearly upon the capital; but that, if he had applied to the inhabitants of Cornwall, he would by this time have been crowned at Weſtminſter. The ambitious youth feels himſelf thoroughly inflamed by this diſcourſe; he ſeems already to graſp the ſceptre, and to ſee his conſort by his ſide on the throne of England. He repairs to Bodmin, where he is joined by three thouſand men; he aſſumes the title of King; and the news quickly reſounds through the nation.

It ſoon reaches the ears of the Engliſh monarch, who, accuſtomed to ſucceſs, ſeemed far

far from apprehending any change of fortune; he rejoiced even in the opportunity of combating with a phantom which had long wearied him with an appearance of reality. Great numbers of the nobility, whom the revolters could not gain, flocked to his ſtandard.

The Duke of York prepares for the field. He had put on his breaſt-plate, and was on the point of heading his troops: the Ducheſs makes a few ſteps to follow him; ſhe detains him, preſſes him to her boſom, drowned in tears, and uttering the moſt piercing lamentations. What, madam, you who love my fame, and deſire my happineſs, to offer me ſo melancholy a ſpectacle! Is it for you to inſpire me with alarms? Dear conſort, you muſt have a diadem; a huſband who is not a King ought not to poſſeſs your affection.—What ſay you, cruel man? A thouſand times have I repeated it to you: is it the ſupreme rank that I love, that I adore in you?—Are you not then attached to grandeur, to illuſtrious deſcent! Can it be me only that you love!—The Duke of York.—Can you entertain the leaſt doubt of it? Can you believe that you alone are not dear to me, ſtripped of that vain ſplendor which has no charms for me? But you are unhappy.—Yes, madam, I am; and perhaps the more guilty. Ah! Once more forgive me;—I ſhall triumph. It is for you that I fly to the field.

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He is unable to tear himſelf from the arms of his wife; he gives way to his tears. At length, inſpired with a ſudden tranſport of courage, he iſſues forth at the head of ſeveral of his friends, accompanied by Aſtley, leaving the Ducheſs guarded by a few of his moſt truſty partiſans.

He appears before the city of Exeter, with the deſign of rendering himſelf maſter of it, and of ſecuring a ſafe retreat in caſe he loſt the battle. He endeavours to conciliate the minds of its inhabitants by dazzling promiſes; but was unable to gain them over to his party. So far were they from giving him the leaſt encouragement, that they even ſhut their gates againſt him. The Duke determines on an aſſault; and loſt in the fruitleſs attempt two hundred of his men. Informed that the Lords Daubeny and Broke were marching to the relief of the town with a conſiderable force, and that the King himſelf was approaching at the head of a numerous army, he raiſed the ſiege, and retreated with precipitation to Taunton. In the adjacent plains he reſolves to wait the arrival of Henry; it was there at laſt that Fortune opened to him the road which was either to conduct him to the glory of a throne or lay him proſtrate in the ſilent tomb.

An what a variety of torturing reflexions was he now plunged! On the one hand, how tempting the fruits of victory! A brilliant

ſceptre!

ſceptre! the pleaſure of heaping wealth and honours on the moſt adorable of women; ſeating her on a throne; evincing himſelf to be a huſband worthy of her; ſeeing a powerful kingdom at her feet, and ranking with the firſt ſovereigns of Europe. To theſe enchanting images how different a picture ſucceeded!—A defeat without reſource, ſhame, deſpair, miſery, death, a priſon ſtill more terrible, or an ignominious end by the hands of the public executioner: But, what was infinitely more dreadful than all theſe, to ſee the miſtreſs of his heart, whom he loved to diſtraction, and who had ſacrificed all to love, awakened from her deluſion, forced to deſpiſe and hate the man who had ſo baſely deceived her;—herſelf the victim of a wicked impoſture, abandoned to adverſity, diſgrace, and infamy;—bluſhing at the ſound of his name; and expiring at length under the weight of ſo many miſeries, deteſting the author of them. Such were the various ſtorms which agitated, by turns, the mind of our preſumptuous youth. Cæſar, when at the point of giving battle to diſpute the empire of the world, had perhaps a ſoul leſs diſturbed.

The Duke of York kept the midnight watch in his tent, attended only by Aſtley, to whom he was imparting theſe tumultuous thoughts: the battle was to be fought on the following day at break of dawn: the Duke was ſupporting his head, with his arm reſting

reſting on a table, on which lay his helmet and his ſword.—A man enters in great haſte, and preſents him a note, conceived in theſe terms:

"I know not whether there will be yet "time when you receive this for you to give "me ſuccour:—Henry is informed of the "place of my retreat, and has detached a "body of troops to ſeize me. Dear huſband, "ſhould I be torn from you?....."

Come, dear Aſtley, let us preſerve the Ducheſs from falling into their hands.—What would you do? Conſider that we are at the very brink.—I am blind to every thing but the danger of a beloved wife; and if I loſe her, what to me imports a victory, the kingdom of England, the empire of the univerſe? My friend, let us run, fly, to remove her to a more ſecure aſylum, and I will return at day-break to conquer or die. None but thyſelf, and ſome domeſtics devoted to me, ſhall be privy to my abſence.

Hardly had he finiſhed theſe words before he mounts his horſe, and, accompanied by Aſtley, flies to Bodmin. He has barely time to preſs his wife in his arms, to receive her careſſes, and to conduct her to a ſequeſtered place at the diſtance of ſeveral miles thence. A few broken ſentences only eſcaped from him, intermixed with ſighs and tears; which were ſucceeded however by tranſports of the moſt daring courage, and promiſes of a ſpeedy

dy return, to lay the trophies he was about to gain at the feet of the Princeſs. He parts from her in haſte, but returns with equal eagerneſs, and on his knees laviſhes on her the tendereſt careſſes; at length he takes his leave, with a torrent of tears, and, attended by his friend, ſeeks again the road to his camp.

The winds are leſs ſwift than his ſpeed. The ſky began to emit a glimmering of light, to announce the approach of day. Our travellers redoubled their efforts; they found themſelves near Taunton, and were in ſight of their banners; when on a ſudden a frightful noiſe ſalutes their ears. A ſoldier, covered with blood, runs towards them, and falls at their horſes feet: he diſcovers the Duke: —Fly, ſaid he;—the enemy attacked us before day break;—your abſence from the camp was known; we are routed; the greateſt part of our troops are ſlain or taken. Prince, you are ſought for in every place; a ſpeedy flight is the only reſource you have left.

He could ſay no more, but inſtantly breathed his laſt.

Oh, Heaven! cries the Duke, I have done every thing for love, and that paſſion ruins me! He draws his ſword, and points it againſt his heart;——Aſtley ſtays his hand:—Have you then forgot the Ducheſs? What, alas! will be her fate? That beloved object ought to awaken all your firmneſs. Live to face your

 miſfortunes:

misfortunes: Hope never forſakes the truly brave.

Aſtley, in ſpeaking of his lady, employed the only effectual method to divert him from his reſolution of killing himſelf. They truſt to the ſwiftneſs of their horſes; their terror deprives them of all knowledge of the country, and they quickly loſe their road. In their rear a cloud of duſt ariſes, and advances towards them; they perceive a ſquadron of the enemy at their heels.——How to eſcape is now the queſtion: A caſtle appears in ſight, to which they precipitately direct their courſe.

But what a thunder-ſtroke!—They find that the caſtle belongs to the Lord Courtney, one of the moſt zealous partiſans of the Houſe of Lancaſter; they determine therefore to avoid it: the enemy preſs cloſe upon them, and are on the point of ſeizing them. Fear takes poſſeſſion of the ſoul of Aſtley. The Lord Courtney had been detained in the country by the illneſs of one of his children, of whom he was very fond. Fortune, ſtill perſecuting the two fugitives with unremitting obſtinacy, ordained that he ſhould ſee them; immediately he makes a motion as though he ſought his domeſtics, in order to get them into his power. The Duke penetrating his deſign, flies directly to him, and with a noble confidence addreſſes him thus:—My Lord, you are my enemy; but you are the moſt

moſt generous of men; I am the Duke of York; I have loſt the day, and am purſued; in your arms I and my friend ſeek for refuge; would you betray us? The Peer is ſtruck ſpeechleſs for ſome minutes:—Yes, I am your enemy, but you are not the Duke of York; you ſhall have no cauſe however to repent the confidence with which I have inſpired you: enter; my houſe is open to you; I have learnt to reſpect the rights of hoſpitality; you have nothing to fear at preſent; when the danger is over you may go elſewhere, to meet the puniſhment you deſerve.

Our hero, whom we have deſcribed as poſſeſſing the moſt pliant and inſinuating diſpoſition, affects to ſee nothing in this anſwer but the magnanimity of the Peer who delivered it, and has the art to appear ignorant of the offenſive part of it: He now gains a victory of a new ſpecies; he engages in a long converſation with Courteney; the reſult of which was a thorough conviction of the injuſtice of his ſuſpicions, and that it was in reality the Duke of York to whom he had granted an aſylum. He gives a ſignal proof of his generoſity, in conducting the two fugitives to a ſecret part of his houſe, where they might be ſafe from the ſtricteſt ſearch.

Hardly had they ſheltered themſelves before the Commanders of the ſquadron that purſued them, alighting from their horſes, entered the caſtle, and enquired of the Peer

if he had not ſeen two men flying acroſs the country, ſaid to be the falſe Duke of York, and his confidant, Aſtley? Courteney haughtily anſwers, he is one of the moſt zealous ſervants of the King, but that he is neither a ſpy nor an informer. This tone effectually ſilenced the officers; who immediately departed, and directed their ſteps and reſearches another way.

The Duke and his friend, who had heard all that had paſſed in their retreat, prepare to take their leave as ſoon as they ſuppoſe the troop to be at a ſufficient diſtance: they endeavour to expreſs their gratitude:—Duke of York, ſays Courteney, for I no longer doubt your being the ſon of Edward IV. you owe me no thanks; I acted from a principle of honour: I am a declared enemy of your Houſe, and have vowed an inviolate attachment to the Houſe of Lancaſter; but I cannot take advantage of the misfortune of an enemy, or betray him when he claims my protection:—remain here till you have nothing more to fear.

They wait for the cloſe of day to quit the caſtle:—Begone, ſays the Peer to the Prince; we may meet again on the field of battle; it is there that I ſhall combat againſt the rival of Henry, and endeavour to give him proofs of my courage; this day I mean only to ſhew him a heart that feels for his ſituation; I intreat him therefore to accept this purſe, which

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in the preſent circumſtance he may have occaſion for, and which he may return to me when his fortunes will permit.

Such was the aſcendant of Warbeck, worthy indeed of the rank and name he had uſurped: he was able to bring over to his ſide thoſe who were the moſt prejudiced againſt his artifices, and to conciliate their friendſhip and eſteem.

Under the friendly ſhade of night, the Duke endeavours to find the road to the aſylum of his conſort: this idea alone poſſeſſes his mind. Immerſed in thought, and ſurrounded by darkneſs, Aſtley wanders from his friend, who ſeeks him in vain: at the inſtant that he imagines he has recovered him he is ſeized by a few ſoldiers, who were dragging him away a priſoner, but he has the addreſs to diſengage himſelf from their hands. The gates of Beaulieu monaſtery ſtand open to receive him; he enters that aſylum, and haſtens to regiſter his name, to entitle himſelf to the privileges annexed to the ſacred reſidence.* It is neceſſary to obſerve that at this

* In theſe aſylums the guilty, let their crimes be ever ſo enormous, were ſure to eſcape from all legal proſecution: they were held ſacred even againſt the authority of Kings, who dared not to violate them, in the fear of incurring the anger and the anathemas of the court of Rome. The Pope, as ſovereign, was exceedingly tenacious of the privileges granted by his predeceſſors to theſe ſanctuaries. In the ſequel, however, Henry VII. with the conſent of Innocent

this period, in England, as in other kingdoms where the authority of the Pope was acknowledged, there were places of refuge for criminals, inviolable even by Sovereigns. The greateſt part of the churches at Rome ſtill poſſeſs this right; which, though a ſource of abuſe, is not the leſs reſpected.

The firſt thought of the unfortunate Duke of York was to endeavour to put a ſpeedy end to a dream which had deceived him; but his waking reflexions were dreadful, and threatened him with a long ſucceſſion of diſgraces ſtill more intolerable. What then could reconcile him to life? It was love, the hope of ſuccouring his wife, of ſeeing her again: and yet it was that beloved wife who had caſt him down into this abyſs; who had defeated all his expectations; for the deſire of conducting her from Bodmin had cauſed him to abandon his army for an inſtant; and he had no ſooner left the camp than the news was induſtriouſly propagated among his troops. Confuſion and diſmay inſtantly ſeized them; a very natural effect on a body of men compoſed of vagabonds, foreigners, undiſciplined

VIII. leſſened theſe privileges, whence reſulted a multitude of abuſes, which were the more dangerous, as means had been found to intereſt ſo reſpectable a power in their preſervation. It is thus, in all ages, what men have regarded as moſt ſacred has been proſtituted to political intrigue and private intereſt. But let us ſeparate the cauſe from the effect; and while we reverence the trunk, let us have courage enough to cut off the wild branches.

ed ſoldiers, of thoſe who, to uſe the expreſſion of father d'Orleans, "fly from poverty and from juſtice."

The unfortunate antagoniſt of Henry, great as his misfortunes were, had ſtill greater to ſuffer: the Prior of Beaulieu informs him, that the retreat of his Ducheſs was diſcovered, and that ſhe was in the power of Henry. —What! I was not ſufficiently cruſhed by the cruelty of my fate! My wife, all that is dear to me, in the hands of a conqueror thirſting for revenge! All is loſt, even my friend, of whom I am deprived by ſome ſad miſchance, and am ignorant of his deſtiny. —Fear not for your life, ſays the hoary prieſt, the King himſelf dares not attempt it. Ah! father, in my preſent ſituation, it is a trifle indeed to be anxious for my life: it is for a wife, reverend father, if you knew . . . .

The Duke of York, exhauſted by his ſorrows, overpowered by the weight of his misfortunes, falls into a kind of lethargy; from which he is rouſed by the charity of a monk, who, with ſtrict injunctions of ſecrecy, preſents him the following

LETTER.

"TO what a ſtate, alas! are you reduced by an affection which mine alone can equal! It was not enough to have alienated, by our union, the minds of a people

ple who ought to have ſupported you; it was not enough to have ſecluded you from the throne of your anceſtors: I am the unhappy cauſe of your loſing the fruit of ſo much labour, of the defeat of your army, of the deſtruction of your hopes, of the triumph of an enemy, who, as the worſt of evils, holds you in his power. If your fame and your honour ſuffered in this ſad cataſtrophe, I ſhould be the leſs forward in entreating you to live: but a diſaſter, like ours, is rather illuſtrious than humiliating. Your life will be ſecure: bravely reſolve to ſupport the burthen; and while breath remains let us not deſpair. Think that if it concerned myſelf only, I would not heſitate a moment what part to act:—in the extremity of miſery, at which we are now arrived, it is eaſy to die; exiſtence itſelf becomes a torment hard to ſuſtain. I ſubmit however to the pain of it, in the delightful hope of our ſeeing each other again; that our fortune may change; that I ſhall always be dear to you; that my love—is it my lot to bring you misfortune? Fear nothing for your faithful wife; ſhe dreads neither Henry nor death. Once more, my beloved Prince, dare to live, and Heaven perhaps may ſend us relief."

This letter retains his ſoul, about to take its flight: the Duke covers it with kiſſes and tears, and depoſits it in his boſom! I will live, cries he, addreſſing himſelf to the friend-

friendly monk, ſince love commands it.... what greater proof of tenderneſs can I give? Oh! father, how happy are thoſe mortals, who, far removed from tumultuous paſſions, glide through life in this peaceful dwelling! they contend not for thrones! they love not! to what has fate reſerved me!

The conqueror had cauſed the monaſtery to be cloſely inveſted. Several of his courtiers were of opinion, that it was lawful for him to employ his authority, and by force of arms to drag his enemy from his retreat, and conſign him to due puniſhment: others, on the contrary, were not willing that the King ſhould give offence to the Pope, by violating the ſacred privileges of the ſanctuaries: they alledged, beſides, that Henry would never be able to perſuade the people that his rival was an impoſtor, if he did not himſelf confeſs the deceit; and they added, that if his life was granted to him, he might be induced, by gratitude, to make a full and ſincere confeſſion. The prudent monarch followed this counſel. Poynings being returned from Ireland, was charged with a commiſſion to entice the Duke of York from the monaſtery, by promiſing him his life on condition of his ſurrendering himſelf. The unfortunate youth accepts the offer; his paſſion, as we have already obſerved, inducing him to prefer an inglorious exiſtence: he was in conſequence conducted to the Tower of London.

It

It was but too true that the Ducheſs of York had been diſcovered and ſeized in her retreat; and ſhe was immediately brought before the conqueror. Never did her charms appear with greater luſtre. How powerful is beauty when united with ſorrow.—Abandoning herſelf to the violence of her deſpair, ſhe forces her way through the ſurrounding guards, and falls at the feet of the monarch, which ſhe bathes with her tears:—Sire,—Sire,—I hear that a miſerable huſband is in your hands; I implore your mercy; deign to grant him a pardon; let *him* live at leaſt, and let me be the only victim ſacrificed to your reſentment; I am the cauſe of all his misfortunes. At theſe words her tears increaſe. Henry, whoſe ſevere and inflexible ſoul had hitherto been an utter ſtranger to every paſſion but that of avarice, now feels with ſurpriſe a ſudden impulſe which he had never before experienced: the ſight of a beautiful woman in diſtreſs excites a perturbation in his mind, which he endeavours in vain to ſuppreſs:—I have promiſed, madam; I give Warbeck his life; but I require an ample confeſſion of all his impoſtures. —An impoſtor, exclaims the Ducheſs! he, —the Duke of York. Ah, Sire, is it enough to have vanquiſhed him, to have taken him priſoner, to be maſter of his life? Deprive him not of the name he is entitled to; it is all, alas; he has now left.—I am willing to believe, madam, that you are in an error: a

Princeſs

Princeſs ſo reſpectable as the Counteſs of Huntley was never intended to be the mate of the ſon of a wretched Jew: I am ſorry that you have been the dupe of his artifices; that ſuch charms ſhould fall to his lot. But his fate is decreed; he ſhall be confined in a dungeon within the Tower till he diſcovers his plot and his accomplices. In ſparing him I may perhaps, in compaſſion, ſend him to herd with the ſervile crew, by the ſide of Simnel, to whom his crimes render him a fit companion: it is all he can expect from the clemency of a King, of whom he has inſolently dared to call himſelf the equal and the rival. As for you, madam, ſaid the monarch, with a ſigh which he was unable to repreſs, you are at liberty in my Court; and believe that there are hearts tender enough to make you forget a huſband too unworthy of you.

Henry orders his attendants to withdraw; and then continues, in a ſofter tone: Madam, my palace ſhall be your only aſylum; the Queen will take care to pay you all the honours due to a Princeſs of the blood royal of Scotland; * whoſe virtues, misfortunes, and charms—

* In fact ſhe was treated as ſuch. Henry preſented her to the Queen, and aſſigned her a conſiderable penſion on his treaſury, which ſhe enjoyed during that monarch's life, and even ſeveral years after his deceaſe. Rapin (from whom I borrow this anecdote) adds, "ſhe was called at the Engliſh court the White Roſe, as well on account of her extraordinary beauty, as of the appellation given to her huſband by the Ducheſs of Burgundy.

charms—You weep; I will do all in my power to dry your tears; be perſuaded of the great concern . . . . .

Without finiſhing the ſentence, he advances towards the Ducheſs, and takes her hand, which he offers to kiſs; but ſhe haſtily withdraws it. He retires, after having whiſpered in her ear: You wiſhed to be a Queen . . . already you reign in a heart which is much affected by your ſituation. He then gives public orders, that the Counteſs of Huntley be treated as a ſovereign, and that all her commands be obeyed.

Forced to accept the propoſals of Henry, ſhe reſided in the palace of Weſtminſter, in apartments adjoining to thoſe of the Queen; who, on her part, kindly endeavoured to alleviate her ſorrows.

But the Ducheſs had ſtill the conſolation of pouring out her ſoul to her faithful confidant, who never deſerted her. Ah, Sulton, judge how great muſt be my torment to be conſtrained to dwell under the ſame roof with my cruel enemy, to be obliged ſo frequently to ſupport his hated preſence. Is it poſſible for me to have excited the leaſt degree of pity in a heart till now inſenſible? Ah, my friend, for whom have I endured life; for whom have I ſubdued myſelf ſo far as to ſee, to liſten to Henry? Oh, too beloved huſband, I feel nothing but thy miſeries; I am ready to ſubmit to every humiliation, if at that price

I can

I can preſerve thy precious life, and break thy galling fetters. It is I, dear friend, who have plunged him into this gulf of wretchedneſs. He flew to my relief. For my ſake he has ſacrificed a kingdom, his glory, his life. Had it not been for me he would have fought at the head of his army; he would have gained the victory; I have not the leaſt doubt of it:—and I ſhould not have been at this moment a prey to every grief. But, Sulton, ſhould it prove true that he has deceived me. Should he not be the real Duke of York.—Ah, he certainly ſprings from an illuſtrious race,—from royal blood. Such greatneſs of ſoul, ſuch powerful attractions; in ſhort, the moſt enchanting of men cannot poſſibly have deſcended from ignoble anceſtors. No: it is a new crime on the part of Henry, which I will never pardon. How hard is my lot, to be obliged to petition thoſe I ought to hate: but I am blind to every thing but my huſband's ſafety. I muſt ſet him free: we will fly together, indulge our affection without reſtraint, and die in ſome obſcure corner of the globe. I am perſuaded that he is not an impoſtor; he is a Prince greatly to be pitied: alas, he has no ſupport but in me.

What were the ſenſations which the King of England experienced at ſight of the Ducheſs. He was himſelf at a loſs to account for the emotions he felt. It is neceſſary to recollect, that motives of policy alone pre-

ſided at his marriage: the ſweet paſſion of love was a ſtranger to his breaſt. Irritated by a ſucceſſion of enemies, by frequent inſurrections, by the continual dangers he had to encounter, cruel perhaps from neceſſity, as much as from his natural diſpoſition, and conſumed by an inſatiable thirſt of gold, it was hardly poſſible for him to be ſuſceptible of any tender impreſſion: it was reſerved however for the irreſiſtible charms of our beautiful Counteſs to vanquiſh the inſenſibility of his nature. Lord Daubeney was at that time the favourite of his Sovereign; to him the monarch thus expreſſed his new feelings: —I cannot imagine the cauſe of theſe agitations of my ſoul: the tears of the Counteſs of Huntley have penetrated even to the bottom of my heart, which ſeems aſtoniſhed at its own emotions. How charming is that lady! ſhe has affected me exceedingly!—That a mean adventurer ſhould enjoy ſo much perfection in her! And he is beloved; when I perhaps, with all my power, may not be able to excite one favourable ſentiment! How happens it that my Queen reſembles not this fair Counteſs! I will have every poſſible mark of reſpect ſhewn to the unfortunate Princeſs: from this moment I grant her a penſion. I will endeavour, by my favours, to deſerve at leaſt her gratitude. Sire, replies the confidant, a great King, like you, may very properly yield to an inclination which would tend

to

to ſoften the cares inſeparable from a crown. It is unneceſſary to inform your Majeſty, that the Counteſs has inſpired you with the tender paſſion.—Is it love then, ſays the King with emotion, that has cauſed theſe ſtrange agitations?—Can I feel that ſentiment for the wife of a vagabond, who ought to ſuffer at the gallows! Beſides, does it become me to fall in love! Me, who ought to be continually employed in war, in puniſhing the guilty, in dreading a reverſe of fortune, and ſecuring a harbour againſt every future ſtorm?—Nothing can prevent your Majeſty from enjoying the ſweets of a paſſion which you may ſo eaſily gratify. The Counteſs will be flattered with an affection ſo worthy to efface all remains of that ſhe now bluſhes to entertain for her huſband. She will readily receive the vows of a Sovereign; and will ſoon forget the wretched Warbeck.

Henry had frequent opportunities of ſeeing, in the Queen's apartment, the object of his paſſion, who every day appeared more amiable in his eyes. He ſtrove, however, to arm his vanity againſt his love; and, by mortifying his pride, to triumph over a woman; who, at the ſame time, fancied that the object of her tendereſt pity and warmeſt affection was equal to herſelf in rank, while ſhe continued to regard the pains taken by the King to repreſent her huſband in the light of an obſcure adventurer, as one of the groſſeſt

artifices he could employ to deceive her.

Enraged at laſt with the little ſucceſs he met with, Henry reſolved upon a ſcheme, which promiſed at once to eſtabliſh him on the throne, and ſecure him perhaps the heart of the Princeſs.—Poynings, inſtructed by his maſter, repairs to the Tower, where he finds the Duke of York unſhaken in his firmneſs by what he had ſuffered: if a few tears flowed from his eyes, the fate of his wife was the ſole cauſe of them. We have already obſerved, it was love alone that determined him to live.—Poynings thus addreſſed him:—The King has given you his royal word to ſpare your life; but you ought to remember that it is upon a condition which you have the power to fulfil;—a writing ſigned with your hand, containing all the particulars of your hiſtory, from your cradle to this moment; every thing concerning yourſelf and your family muſt be truly and fully related; and to this ample confeſſion muſt be added the names of your accomplices, with the whole of their meaſures and councils:—— on this condition my Sovereign will keep his promiſe.

The youth, ſhaking his chains, and looking on the emiſſary of Henry with a diſdainful air:—Is it a King that ſends you? and is ſuch his promiſe? At this inſtant it is more neceſſary than ever for me to recollect that I am the Duke of York. My accomplices are all

all thoſe who deteſt uſurpation and perjury; and that is all I have to anſwer.—But what can you hope by perſiſting in your impoſture?—If Henry knows not how to reign I know how to die. It is for a wife alone that my ſoul is diſturbed.—What, then, you do not mean to confeſs?—I am the Duke of York, the ſon of Edward IV. the brother of the unfortunate Edward V. I feel myſelf worthy of my birth; while the grandſon of Owen Tudor is fully qualified to break his ſacred promiſe, and completely to exterminate a family, the weak remains of which had eſcaped the ſword of the inhuman Richard III. You have now heard all I have to confeſs to my laſt breath.—But think, the ſcaffold awaits you. —I will mount it with the ſame intrepidity as if I aſcended the throne.

Poynings returns to his maſter, and informs him of the obſtinacy and audaciouſneſs of the priſoner.—The King continues ſilent for a conſiderable time; then ſuddenly awaking from his reverie:—Poynings, the reſolution of Warbeck ſhall yield to the new attack I prepare for him; be aſſured he cannot poſſibly reſiſt:—Yes, I ſhall obtain the deſired confeſſion.—Henry acquaints him with the victorious expedient he had deviſed, and Poynings inſtantly repeats his viſit to the priſoner.

The Ducheſs had deſired to be confined in the tower with her huſband; but Henry perſiſted in his refuſal to grant her this favour,

or even once to allow her the conſolation of ſeeing him. Jealouſy, united with reaſons of ſtate, formed invincible obſtacles to her deſire: the only comfort which that unhappy Princeſs could find in her afflictions was the liberty of weeping in ſecret, and the certainty that her huſband's life at leaſt was in ſafety.

Poynings ſcarcely preſents himſelf before the priſoner, when he thus accoſts him:—— The dread of the puniſhment which threatens you is then unable to wreſt from you the confeſſion which you owe to repentance and to truth?—I have already explained myſelf. —Alas! am I able to anticipate that death which is about to ſeize me? I ſpeak to an Engliſhman, whom I believe too generous to ſtab me in one much dearer to me than myſelf, and by no means guilty. I entreat him only to obtain from Henry the liberty of my wife, that ſhe may return to Scotland, and forget her wretched huſband. As for me—Sir, have you ever loved?—Yes, I have felt that paſſion, and at this moment it preſſes you, by my mouth, to declare . . Ah! tremble;—Are you then greatly attached to your wife?—I would die a thouſand deaths to preſerve her life.—Know, then, wretched youth, her life is in danger: ſhudder at the thought; —the axe, the axe,—is raiſed againſt her head, this day, this moment, the executioner —Oh! ſtay,—ſtay,--What a dreadful image!

But what crime has ſhe committed? Is it her love for me? I am the cauſe of all her misfortunes. I ſhall die too late!—Still you may ſave her.—Can I prevent the blow? At what price? Speak, ſpeak, ſhall I ſuffer all that the utmoſt rage of ſkilful malice can inflict: I am ready; let the miniſters of vengeance come; let them haſten to tear me piece-meal, and drench themſelves with my blood, provided the Ducheſs lives: yes, let me expire amidſt unheard of tortures, with the ſweet conſolation that ſhe is not a partaker of my horrible deſtiny.—Hear me a moment: it is not your death that is required; you may ſave your own life, as well as that of your wife; perhaps you may even regain your liberty: only enable me to carry your confeſſion to the King.—What do you propoſe to me?—Clifford knew, and has diſcovered the whole: Frion himſelf . . . How? Frion . . . Has deſerted the Ducheſs of Burgundy, and is come over to the King; which is ſufficient to convince you that all your artifices are reveal'd.—Frion too! oh! Heaven.—The King, you ſee, is ignorant of nothing that relates to you: but he inſiſts on having their declarations confirmed by your confeſſion, under your hand.—I underſtand you; not ſatisfied with ſeeing me expire in tortures, he impatiently deſires to ſee me covered with ſhame and ignominy, and cruelly requires that I ſhould raiſe the everlaſting monument of my own

own diſgrace.—Where are the executioners? —They will bring you the head of your wife. —She my victim? You will quickly be ſtained with her blood.—Adieu.

Let us fancy ourſelves in a priſon; let us deſcend to the bottom of a dungeon, enlightened by a lamp, whoſe glimmering rays ſerve only todiſcover horrors which darkneſs would conceal;—then turn our eyes towards the miſerable inhabitant of this gloomy receſs, and behold a young man of the moſt noble and intereſting figure, loaded with chains, pale, emaciated, weeping, throwing himſelf on the damp earth, then r ſing, and crying out in agony, repeating inceſſantly: Ah, dear wife! dear wife, thou dieſt, and I am thy murderer! That neck ſo beautiful, ſo paſſionately beloved!——Oh! Sir, return, return,—one word: let the cruel victor ſuſpend for a few days this atrocious crime, a crime truly worthy of the murderer of Stanley, his friend.—It will not be deferred. —To-morrow.—No; this day; this hour; this inſtant.

A ſtranger enters the priſon, and whiſpers Poynings.—You will not then (continues the latter to the Duke of York) ſave your wife? I am juſt informed that her death is decreed; and you will afterwards make that confeſſion when it will be too late. I leave you.—Yet one moment;—my wife.—She is in the hands of the executioner, ſaid the meſſenger, who only

only waits for your anſwer to ſtrike.—Ah! run,—fly,—ſtay (turning to Poynings) I will confeſs:—to what a dreadful extremity am I reduced! Is this the reward of ſo much love? Go then;——it may,——it muſt be ſo! Yes; I will reveal it. I am diſtracted by a thouſand tortures!—Well, replies Poynings, are you determined to preſerve her life?—Without doubt; it is for me alone to die.—You will give me then the confeſſion required by his Majeſty?—Let my wife be ſaved. Haſte, ſays Poynings to the meſſenger, and defer the execution till my return; above all acquaint our Sovereign, that I fly to bring him what he demands: as you go out, order me pen, ink, and paper.

The Duke of York felt in all his ſenſes an inexpreſſible agitation; his tears flowed in ſtreams; he uttered continually the moſt diſmal groans, ſo much was he tortured with the thoughts of his ſituation. Poynings however had now the ſatisfaction of ſeeing his deſires accompliſhed. But when the Duke ſaw the materials for writing, he exclaimed:—Rather let me periſh under the moſt exquiſite agonies that cruelty can inflict!—Think on the Counteſs of Huntley:—At the ſound of that dear name all his courage forſakes him; he ſeizes the pen, trembling from head to foot; and, after a deep ſilence for ſome moments, exclaimed, ſhe will live then!——Yes; the King will keep his word. Ought I to truſt to it,

it, replies the priſoner, in a tone of indignation? But I ſhall have no cauſe of ſelf-reproach. With a trembling hand, whilſt a cold ſweat bedewed his whole frame, pronouncing theſe words, interrupted by his ſighs, "Oh! dear object of my adoration; what more could I do for thee!" He writes as follows:

"When a man, whatever he be, poſſeſſes a ſoul ſo elevated as to conceive a project worthy of his ambition, he ought to attempt every thing to accompliſh it; if he ſucceeds not he ſhould die. But what is death in the eyes of tyrants? Ingenious in the arts of cruelty, they have invented wounds much more inhuman than ſuch as deprive us only of life: there exiſts then one torture, at the idea of which I ſhudder; and I yield to the horror it inſpires me with. It is for a wife, a beloved, innocent wife that I have trembled; for her I ſubmit to every diſgrace which can be inflicted in my miſerable ſituation. I have a promiſe that the life of that dear wife ſhall be ſpared; I invoke the ſupreme Being to atteſt that promiſe; yes, oh! King of kings, in thy hands I depoſit my complaint and my revenge, if that ſacred engagement ſhould be violated.

"True it is, I am not the Duke of York; he perhaps would neither have poſſeſſed ſuch a ſoul, nor the noble ambition which inflamed it; I am the ſon of an obſcure private man;

man; my real name is *Warbeck*; a name I would have rendered illuſtrious, whilſt ſo many others diſhonour the race from which they ſpring. One ſtation alone in the world attracted my notice, as worthy of my ambition to attain; and that was the throne. It is unneceſſary now to examine whether my anceſtors were inferior or ſuperior to thoſe of Owen Tudor; whether Henry is an uſurper or a lawful King; whether the conſent of the people of England has conſecrated his elevation to that ſupreme eminence: it is ſufficient to render me guilty, that ſucceſs attended the enterpriſes of my conqueror; and in conſequence I have committed a crime in his eyes: I have attempted to deprive him of that ſceptre which he wreſted from Richard, and which Richard himſelf had forced from his nephews. I have aſſumed a name and character to which I had no right; I acknowledge it; it is a meanneſs which diſgraces me, and for which I am juſtly puniſhed: I ſhould have leſs cauſe to bluſh for a real crime: Falſehood is always deſpicable; but greatneſs of mind ſometimes accompanies a wicked action. Doubtleſs my ambition would gladly have employed more noble means; I ſhould have aſpired to exiſt as myſelf; to be able to ſay, it is Warbeck, the ſon of a merchant of Tournay, who declares war againſt the King of England, who prepares to attack him even on his throne, and attempts to precipitate him

him from it. Conſidered in this light, my temerity would have excited laughter; whilſt in the character of the Duke of York, againſt which my pride revolted, the enterpriſe was regarded with admiration; which might indeed have ſerved to flatter my vanity, but could only give a poor and even humiliating ſatisfaction to a ſoul jealous of proving its native powers.—What then, you may demand, incited me to engage in a ſcheme which in ſecret I diſdained?—Love, the moſt violent, tyrannical, unbounded love. From the firſt moment that I beheld the Counteſs of Huntley the ſubtle flame poſſeſſed my ſoul: that paſſion will ſurvive me; yes, I certainly behold the period of my exiſtence, but I ſee none to my affection. Such is the real foundation of all that Henry can juſtly reproach me with. I adore the Counteſs; and no man beneath a ſovereign, or one born with pretenſions to that rank, ſhould dare to aſpire to the name of her huſband. For her I ſunk ſo low as to practice deceit: for her I conceived the arduous project of inveſting my head with a diadem. Imagine to yourſelf the moſt atrocious crimes; I would have perpetrated all without the leaſt remorſe to obtain only a look from that miſtreſs of all my ſenſes, who will continue to inflame this heart to its laſt ſigh.

"After this confeſſion, I expect not, nor will I accept a pardon, like the wretched Sim-

nel,

nel, whoſe deſtiny is obſcured by ignominy; death itſelf, with the moſt excruciating tortures, I prefer to ſo diſgraceful an exiſtence. But let not the Counteſs of Huntley, let not my wife be puniſhed for an enterpriſe, which would doubtleſs have been juſtified by ſucceſs, criminal as it muſt appear at this day."

With theſe words Warbeck cloſes his confeſſion, and delivering the writing to Poynings, he adds, with a melancholy, but intrepid tone: All is now diſcovered, and death alone is left me. Then throwing himſelf on the ground, he hides his face, and keeps a profound ſilence.—Poynings urges him to reveal his accomplices; but obtains no anſwer.—Do you think then, ſaid he, that this confeſſion will ſuffice?—He at length replies, I have told you; nothing but death remains. Poynings perſiſts in vain to interrogate him farther: convinced that his priſoner reſolves to be ſilent, he haſtens with the confeſſion to his royal maſter, whom he thus addreſſes:

Sire, we have at laſt obtained all your Majeſty deſired; behold here what is ſufficient to confound and deſtroy the factions that have been hitherto inceſſantly renewing. It is neceſſary to ſend immediately ſome truſty perſons to the Tower, with poſitive orders to watch the motions of Warbeck. He is impatient to terminate his life, and it is your intereſt to preſerve it.

Henry iſſues his commands accordingly—Poynings proceeds to inform the monarch of the ſtratagem he had employed, that only by threatning Warbeck with the death of his wife, he had ſucceeded in drawing from him a declaration ſo very eſſential in the preſent conjuncture. The King embraces, in proſpect, all the advantages which the writing affords him; he perceives that, beſides the total extinction of the party of the Yorkiſts, the Counteſs, dejected at the diſcovery of ſuch a huſband, would baniſh him from her heart, and be diſpoſed to liſten to a lover who might exert his authority: he orders her to be conducted to his preſence.

The Counteſs appears.—Madam, will thoſe beauteous eyes be for ever filled with tears?—Ah! Sire, is it for your Majeſty to attend to my weeping? Who is it, alas! that cauſes my tears to flow? It depends on you alone to dry up their ſource.—I thought, madam, that my clemency had done more than you yourſelf could have expected; the ſword, which both juſtice and my ſafety had pointed againſt the guilty, has been averted from him; I have ſpared his life. In my Court you are treated leſs as a priſoner than regarded as an equal to the Queen; all theſe kindneſſes, it is with regret I mention them, ought at leaſt to have procured me ſome return of gratitude on your part.—Sire, my huſband!—Is little deſerving, madam, of that love which another would know

know how to value. It is no longer poſſible for me to conſtrain my ſentiments.—Think, Sire, that I am able to afford you only my eſteem; all I dare ſolicit is your pity. You tell me of your favours; complete your generoſity by reſtoring liberty to the unfortunate, and then my gratitude—You love him, madam; ah! that is not the leaſt of his crimes! But it is abſolutely neceſſary for me to open your eyes, that you may behold the truth, and contemplate, in all his baſeneſs, the object of a paſſion who diſhonours you.—Who diſhonours me? The Duke of York?—He is nothing more than a vile impoſtor: I have declared it.—And is it then by ſuch artifices that your Majeſty perſiſts in attempting to triumph over my love and my duty! Sire, augment the load of chains upon a wretch who is in your power; forget your royal promiſe; deprive him of life: but ſtill leave him his name, his ſacred character, which is above the reach of his capricious fortune. Think you that I am ignorant of the calumnies propagated concerning him? They are the invention of your partiſans. A King ought not to derive ſupport from the unworthy means employed by ignoble enemies; it is by deeds of arms in the open field that he ſhould oppoſe his rivals, and endeavour to ſubdue them by ſuperior valour. Fortune has decided in your favour; render yourſelf worthy of victory, and add not inſult to miſery.—

Bound in your chains, is my huſband for that reaſon the leſs deſcended from an illuſtrious Houſe, the ſon of a King.—Say rather, interrupts the impatient monarch, the ſon of an obſcure man, from whom he even merits not the birth he received, ſince he has the audacity to deceive you.——Sire, he loves me too much to be capable of deceiving me; it is eaſy to ſee it: he is of the blood which you have proſcribed, of which you would ſpill the laſt drop. It is you, alas! who ſtrives to impoſe upon my credulity.

Henry now draws a paper from his pocket, and preſents it to the Ducheſs with an air of triumph:—You know the hand?—The Duke of York's!——Read, madam.

The Ducheſs devours the writing with her eyes: When ſhe came to the confeſſion of the impoſture, letting the paper fall from her trembling hands, ſhe exclaims: Juſt Heaven, is it not then the Duke of York to whom I am married, whom I loved ſo tenderly! Not daring to give a looſe to the agitations of her mind on this too cruel diſcovery, ſhe was on the point of fainting.—When ſhe was a little recovered from the effects of her firſt ſurprize, the King thus proceeded:—You ſee it clearly, madam; you can no longer doubt your being the dupe of falſhood, of the groſſeſt effrontery, which alone is deſerving of the moſt exemplary puniſhment. Was it for ſo vile a wretch as this to breathe his vows, to dare even

even to raiſe his eyes to you, while the greateſt of monarchs of the earth would combat for the prize of one of your looks. Forget, madam, a huſband ſo thoroughly unworthy of being united to ſuch excellence.

The Ducheſs, without attending in the leaſt to the King's expreſſions, again takes the paper, again peruſes it, repeating with ſighs that ſeemed to rend her heart: he is not the Duke of York? After reading it over ſeveral times, ſhe throws it at a diſtance from her, and falls into a ſtate of inſenſibility. The King ſeizes the firſt moment of her returning faculties to continue his harrangue:—I confeſs, madam, this reverſe of fortune is terrible; but you ought to bear it with firmneſs: you have been the victim of a ſentiment which does honour to your mind; you believed that you pitied, loved, and eſpouſed an unfortunate Prince, a man worthy of you; but you now find yourſelf in the arms of an audacious adventurer. Separate his deſtiny from your's; diſſolve thoſe ties which were formed by deceit: you will always remain a Princeſs, allied to kings, and Counteſs of Huntley.

This lady, who might be cited as a model of heroiſm, now thoroughly awakened from a death-like ſtupor, interrupts the monarch with an air of dignity:—I will ever remain the wife of Warbeck:—What ſay you;—My reſolution is fixed;—he loves, he is at

the loweſt abyſs of miſery: for my ſake he has made that confeſſion, which the moſt dreadful tortures could never have forced from him. Alas! the unhappy man was concerned only for my ſafety.——You were about to order my execution! Ah! ſtrike, pierce my heart, but ſave my huſband.——Is it for you, madam, to ſuſpect me capable of ſuch inhumanity? Can you imagine that I had the moſt diſtant idea of cauſing you the leaſt vexation? Will you never underſtand my real ſentiments? Do you not perceive the art that has been practiſed, by repreſenting your danger to Warbeck, to obtain from him a declaration neceſſary to my authority and my repoſe.——But you have deſtroyed my peace more than the multitude of enemies that aroſe againſt me; yes, you are infinitely more formidable to me than Simnel or even Warbeck, whoſe enterprize was conducted by a hand well known to me. ——Ah! Sire, at what a time muſt I ſtill implore in vain? I embrace your knees; permit me to enter the Tower;—to ſee . . . You aſk, madam,——are you ſtill concerned for that impoſtor; and ſhall I ſend you thither to ſhare his deteſted embraces.——Your Majeſty refuſed me the conſolation of partaking the horrors of his dungeon;—grant me now at leaſt . . . it is for the laſt time that I will ſee him, or ſpeak to him, or dry his tears.—

Sire,

Sire, ſhould you deny me this favour you will ſee me expire.

The Ducheſs had fallen at Henry's feet, and gave vent to a flood of tears. A ſight ſo moving ſoftens and diſarms his anger: his love is ſacrificed to pity; I will give you, madam, this proof of my ſenſibility; judge of your own power over my heart. Go; and if you are able, ſupport the preſence of a man who has ſo cruelly injured; repeat to him your vows of affection; while ... But think, madam, you abuſe my weakneſs, and that from thenceforth you muſt never hope, no, never hope, to ſee him more: however, I here renew to you my promiſe to ſpare his life. Let my clemency lead him to repentance, and excite him to name his accomplices; for you, madam, remember that gratitude is the leaſt return you owe me.

The intereſt of the King of England as well as his deſire to pleaſe the Counteſs, engaged him to preſerve the Life of his priſoner: but that unhappy youth (to whom we ſhall for the future give only his true name of Warbeck) wiſhed only to put an end to it. Surrounded with guards, who narrowly watched all his motions day and night, he was compelled, as his only reſource to form the reſolution of ſtarving himſelf: in conſequence he had fallen into a ſtate of languid debility very little remote from death.

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An officer commands the guards to withdraw, and retires himſelf with them: the Counteſs of Huntley enters with trembling ſteps, ſcarcely able to ſupport herſelf, ſo much had her misfortunes depreſſed her. With a voice hardly articulate, before ſhe could even diſcern the miſerable object, ſhe thus began: Is it you, is it you, who have deceived me? But no ſooner does ſhe perceive him, ſunk under the preſſure of his chains, and almoſt expiring, than haſtening to him, with extended arms, ſhe exclaims: Ah, wretched man!—It was then that nature, pity, love, triumphed over inſulted pride; the firſt of women ſinks into the moſt paſſionate of lovers; ſhe melts into a flood of tears.

What a ſituation for Warbeck! what corroding remorſe does he now feel!—Yes: I have deceived you! that—that is a crime I can never forgive myſelf! But . . . you have felt that powerful paſſion . . . which has been the cauſe of all my crimes, of all my miſeries! The firſt moment of my ſeeing you, a ſudden flame darted into my ſoul; I adored you as my ſupreme goddeſs; you became abſolute miſtreſs of my heart, of my reaſon, of all my ſenſes; an irreſiſtible impulſe poſſeſſed me. My conſcience revolted inceſſantly againſt the means I employed to ſeduce you: I was tormented; and you muſt often have perceived it. Even in your arms, the tumults,

mults, the ſtruggles in my mind, the remorſe I felt ſtill haunted me: but a word from your lips, a ſingle look, diſperſed thoſe ſtorms, and reſtored me to the dominion of that paſſion, at once the delight and the torture of my life. Aſtley, whoſe friendly aid my cruel fate has denied, was charged with a letter for you; wherein I had revealed the deception which abaſes me ſtill more than it injures you.—No; I am not the Duke of York: I am an obſcure mortal, who ſoared above all other men, by an intrepid ſpirit, an unbounded ſenſibility, and a conſuming paſſion. Never did mortal love to ſuch a degree as I have preſumed to love you: I have given you the ſtrongeſt proof of it; to ſacrifice my life for your ſake would have been nothing; but I now die covered with ſhame. Your fate was at a criſis; I heſitated not a moment; I diſcovered all.—I have now ſeen you .... Live; return to Scotland; and forget ſuch a wretch as I am. Nothing remains for me but to breathe out a ſoul thoroughly ſatiated with ſorrow and diſgrace. Forget thee! replied the Counteſs, ah! could I forget thee, even if I liſtened only to the dictates of a too juſt reſentment? I have ſaid to Henry, I have repeated to myſelf, Warbeck I am thy wife; Yes, I am thy wife: I feel it too much from that tender affection to which I ſacrifice every thing. Far,—far from me, all ye deluſive images of birth, grandeur, ſovereignty!

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—You are not the Duke of York! Never more ſhall that name eſcape from my lips.—She reclines on the chains of her huſband; her tears increaſe; then, with a tone of voice more compoſed, ſhe proceeds:——It is the Counteſs of Huntley who ſhould be forgotten: to day let us conſider nothing but thy wife, this diſmal dwelling, theſe cold fetters. But hear me: the moments which I paſs in joining my ſighs with thine are all numbered: didſt thou know . . . perhaps I ſhall never be permitted to behold thee again! It is the laſt time that I ſhall hear the pleaſing declaration, that I am beloved by the man I hold moſt dear! Yet were I at liberty to ſhare the horrors of thy priſon, to ſuccour thee, to receive thy tears into my faithful boſom, to expire by thy ſide; but I have no conſolation to hope for. You talk of my returning into my own country; in what manner do you think I ſhall be received there? I have forfeited all my rights. Warbeck, thy diſgrace is mine. Thy misfortunes and my love muſt be hereafter my only occupation. What will be our deſtiny? Your enemies wiſh for a diſcovery of your accomplices: I know you ſufficiently to be perſuaded that you will carry their names with you to the ſilent tomb. Admitting that Henry ſhould be faithful to his promiſe, you might drag on a few days in this dreary abode,—hateful exiſtence,—guilty as you muſt appear (it cannot be concealed)

cealed) in the eyes of Europe, in your own ſight;—diſtracted by remorſe, by the recollection of a deceitful dream, which, alas! is vaniſhed! We ſhall be ſeparated; and I---no; all the horror of our ſituation is not yet revealed to thee. My affection, which I can never ſubdue, my duty requires that I live and die thy wife.---We will expire together. A monk ſhould have delivered thee a letter, in which I had declared my true ſentiments. See!---it is thus that we expiate our faults; thus we triumph over fortune, and ſurmount all obſtacles: Behold! (drawing a poniard from her boſom) Ever ſince the cruel moment that parted us have I provided this reſource for myſelf: I doubt not of thy courage; mine ſhall be inſtantly known to thee. Follow the example.

Warbeck ſhrieks out; and, in ſpite of his chains and his weakneſs, he ſprings to his wife, who had already the poniard at her breaſt.

Hold, hold, cries a man who, at this critical moment, opened the priſon door, and, flying to the Counteſs, forced the fatal weapon from her hand. Warbeck and his wife are ſtruck motionleſs with ſurpriſe and joy; both at the ſame inſtant exclaiming Aſtley!---Yes, Aſtley himſelf, who flies to your relief. You ſhall know all: the approach of night favours us; the time preſſes; one of your guards is at my heels; he comes,

comes, my dear Warbeck, to looſe your fetters; horſes are waiting for us; think on nothing but flight.

In fact the guard appears, and releaſes the priſoner from his chains.—Already they are at a diſtance from London, and ſafe from the purſuit of their enemies.

The ſudden tranſition from a ſituation the moſt miſerable that can be conceived, to a condition directly oppoſite, the various ſenſations, the revolution produced in the minds of theſe tender lovers, are all better felt than expreſſed.

Neither the Counteſs or her huſband were yet recovered from the aſtoniſhment which ſeized them at an event ſo unexpected, ſo unhoped for: they were for ſome time unable to ſpeak. At length Warbeck firſt interrupts the delicious ſilence:—It is you, it is you, my dear Aſtley, who are our deliverer! Is is poſſible that Fortune ſhould relent in our favour? My friend is reſtored to me! To him I owe my liberty—the life of a beloved wife! without thy ſeaſonable aid I had loſt her for ever! But tell me, by what enchantment do I meet thee thus?

You recollect that the darkneſs of the night occaſioned me to loſe the road; but I had juſt found you again, and was upon the point of rejoining you, when you were ſurrounded by a detachment of the enemy. Had I yielded to my firſt tranſports, I ſhould have exert-

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ed my utmoſt endeavours, weak and unavailing as they muſt have proved for your reſcue: my friendſhip however prevailed over my imprudence. I ſought to aſſemble a few of our ſtraggling ſoldiers, in the hope of bringing you an effectual ſuccour: but I learnt that you had taken ſanctuary at Beaulieu, and that you were afterwards impriſoned in the Tower, having obtained a promiſe from Henry that your life ſhould be ſpared. It was not enough, at ſuch a time, for me to remain inactively faithful to my friend, and to mourn in ſecret the ſeverity of his deſtiny; I formed a ſcheme of being ſerviceable to him. To remove all ſhadow of ſuſpicion, and deſtroy every trace of our intimacy, I inſtantly reſolved to burn the letter you charged me to deliver to your lady, in caſe of your periſhing in battle; I changed my dreſs and name, and with the help of my diſguiſe, I procured a paſſage to Flanders, where I obtained a private audience of the Ducheſs of Burgundy, who had been previouſly informed of your diſaſters. Affected by your intrepid caution with regard to her, ſhe ordered me to employ all poſſible means for your releaſe, and to conduct you and your lady to the Court. You may rely on her gratitude and eſteem (ſuch were her expreſſions) for a recompence which may perhaps conſole you for the loſs of a crown: ſhe thinks you worthy of the moſt exalted ſtation: to theſe marks of fa-

vour ſhe adds a large ſum of money, of which I ſhall give you an account.—From her own mouth I learnt that Frion baſely betrayed you. I loſt no time in returning to England; I had the happineſs to gain ſeveral of your guards, who were not proof againſt my liberality; in ſhort, I contrived means to deceive the watchful miſtruſt of Henry, to overcome every obſtacle, and to effect your eſcape. At a few miles hence we ſhall find a ſloop ready to convey us to a port where you will have nothing more to fear. You doubtleſs retain the character of Duke of York, and—repeat no more that name, interrupted haſtily the Counteſs: Aſtley, my huſband was never formed to play the part of an impoſtor: let him appear what he truly is; no more borrowed grandeur; I for ever abjure what belonged to me, and glory in being the wife of Warbeck; let him but manifeſt his valour, his intrepidity, his virtues, without impoſing upon others, or himſelf, and his wife will rejoice in being partaker of his deſtiny.

Filled with admiration and love, Warbeck tenderly embraces his wife:——I am your huſband; you permit me to retain that title! What dignities can equal it! Your lover is far ſuperior to the kings of the earth. May I hope that the moſt reſpectful, pure, and tender affection will obliterate from your mind all remembrance

membrance of my crime! Alas! I can never forgive myſelf!

The manſion of the nobleman, who had acted ſo generouſly towards Warbeck, lay directly in their road. Aſtley, ſaid the latter, let us not quit England without diſcharging a debt we owe here, which honour demands. Repay this truly noble Peer the money he lent me in my diſtreſs, and aſſure him that, though not as Duke of York, Warbeck is not the leſs grateful for his kindeſs. Aſtley haſtens to oblige his friend. The Peer receives the money, ſaying, I was not deceived concerning the character of Warbeck; it muſt however be acknowledged, that he merited to have been born Duke of York: he gives me a freſh proof of his confidence in me; I will return it by a new teſtimony of my ſincerity. Warn him to take care that he be not diſcovered; the King will not again yield to the dictates of mercy; a reward is offered for Warbeck's head.

This report was but too true: No ſooner was Henry informed of the flight of the priſoner and his wife than he ſent poſitive orders throughout the kingdom to purſue and apprehend them at all events. To the anger of the monarch was ſuperadded the rage of a jealous and rejected lover.——In the boſom of his confidant Daubeney he vented the diſtractions of his ſoul.——With his own hands he threatened to ſacrifice the fugitives,

ſhould they again fall into his power :—Yes, my firſt victim ſhall be the Counteſs herſelf, lovely as I once thought her ; in her blood will I extinguiſh a flame ſo unworthy of me. To debaſe myſelf to that degree, when I ought to have known no other care but that of reigning ! Was it for me to admit into my breaſt ſo fooliſh a ſentiment ? I will expiate my weakneſs by ſacrificing its object : ſhe ſhall periſh, together with her vile huſband.

The intelligence received from the generous Peer, was a terrible ſtroke to Aſtley ; he dreaded the impoſſibility of their reaching the veſſel, which they regarded as the end of their diſaſters, and again recurs to his diſguiſe to penetrate the truth. He quickly rejoins his friends, and imparts to them the unwelcome tidings. The Counteſs is alarmed, but trembles much leſs for herſelf than for her huſband ; ſhe ſees death awaiting him at every ſtep. They take advantage of the darkneſs of the ſucceeding night ; and as they drew near the coaſt, Aſtley quits them for a moment, and returning, thus animates their ſpeed : redouble your pace ; the ſloop is ready ; let us once get ſafe into the boat, and we will brave the utmoſt exertions of England.

They now touched at the happy moment of being relieved from the heavy burthen which had ſo long oppreſſed them. Again their hearts expand with hope, confidence, and joy. The noiſe of the waves breaking againſt

againſt the ſhore is muſic to their liſtening ears. Already their delighted eyes behold the friendly bark: they are on the point of entering it;——when Aſtley, who preceded them, ſuddenly returns, and with terror in his looks, exclaims: Let us fly;—the coaſt is lined with ſoldiers;—they have ſeized the maſter of the ſloop; the name of Warbeck ſtill reſounds in my ears.

The Counteſs has no longer ſtrength to guide her horſe; the reins ſlip from her hands; ſhe ſinks into the arms of her huſband, and with a fainting voice exclaims, may the ſame ſtroke diſpatch us both!

However, they ſtrive to diſcover a place of retreat: they perceive a foreſt, towards which they excite their courſers with the utmoſt impetuoſity; the earth trembles beneath their feet: they ſeek an entrance, and eagerly diſmount to conceal themſelves amidſt the thickets; through which Aſtley firſt obſerves an aperture which attracts his curioſity; he approaches it.—Heaven, he cries, with tranſport, affords us a viſible proof of its protection: I think I have found one of thoſe ſubterraneous caverns, ſo common in England, formed, in a time of civil commotion. Thither Warbeck haſtens, ſupporting in his arms his fainting wife. They deſcend a flight of ſteps, compoſed of rough ſtones, rudely placed, at the bottom of which they diſcovered, by the ſmall glimmering of light it received from the entrance,

entrance, a ſort of cavern which ſeemed to extend its dimenſions as they advanced. It was impoſſible to gueſs what kind of aſylum they had thus fortunately met with, ſo thick a darkneſs reigned therein: Into this obſcure dwelling they likewiſe brought their horſes.

The Counteſs recovers her ſenſes, but ſtill ignorant of the place in which ſhe found herſelf, ſhe utters a loud ſhriek. Oh! my ſupreme miſtreſs, ſaid Warbeck, intermingling tears with his kiſſes, you are in the arms of your huſband, your lover. He explains to her the nature of their preſent retreat, and in what manner an over-ruling Providence had directed them to it. Let us remain here, added he, a few hours; we will embrace the firſt favourable moment that offers for quitting it.

The Counteſs ſeats herſelf on one of thoſe ſtones which had been cut into ſteps:—It is here, ſaid ſhe, that I will die; why ſhould we go farther to ſeek a grave?

The two friends aſcend the ſteps in profound ſilence; they were arrived near the opening, when a new cauſe of terror affects them: they are alarmed by the ſound of the trampling of a great number of horſes; and they clearly diſtinguiſh the ſoldiers diſperſed in the foreſt. The two fugitives regain the cavern. Warbeck flies to his wife, and, tenderly embracing her, ſays: It is uſeleſs to flatter ourſelves any longer; we are utterly ruined.—

ruined.—I think however I may yet ſave my wife and my friend.—Aſtley, ſtay here with this dear object of my affection, whom I have rendered ſo unhappy. To thy well-known friendſhip I commend her. You may both perhaps eſcape thoſe ſtrict reſearches which have me only for their principal object; my enemies wiſh to ſeize on me alone.—I return to the entrance of the cavern; I will preſent myſelf to my purſuers; they will attack me, and will gain only a corpſe to bear to their inhuman maſter: my own hands ſhall put a period to my life before I ſuffer myſelf to fall into their power.—Unhappy man, what ſay you, replies the Counteſs, holding his arm! Do you think it poſſible for me to live without you? Are you ignorant that, deprived of you, my exiſtence will be a continnal torment? Thinkeſt thou that only Warbeck knows how to die? Haſt thou forgot that yeſterday thou couldſt aſpire no higher than to imitate thy wife?—My dear friends, ſays Aſtley, I will never deſert you; if we muſt die, let us die together. Inſtantly they both throw themſelves before the deſpairing Warbeck, who long ſtruggled to execute his dreadful purpoſe, conjuring his wife eſpecially, with a torrent of tears, not to expoſe herſelf to the fate which threatened her.

They all aſcend together to a ſmall diſtance from the entrance of the cavern: But now the noiſe, which had ſo lately terrified them,

was

was ſucceeded by a dead calm. They liſten;—not the leaſt ſound is be heard. The darkneſs beginning to diſappear, they replunge into their obſcure abode, uncertain what reſolution to form, and overwhelmed by their calamities.

Without waiting for day-light, Aſtley ventures to collect ſome fragments of wood near the mouth of the cavern, and with the aid of a flint kindles a fire; by the feeble rays of which they are able to contemplate their aſylum. They find, in effect, that it was wrought with great art, and compoſed of various apartments, all communicating with each other.

In a corner of one of them a ſpring of water bubbled out, and formed, as it were, a baſon in miniature. The firſt motion of the Counteſs, on ſeeing it, was to fill the hollow of her hand with water, and drink of it.—— Oh! Heaven, cries Warbeck, to what extremity, moſt adorable of women, have I reduced you!—When theſe miſerable fugitives were able to diſtinguiſh each others countenances, they were ſtruck with horror at the ſight. Warbeck was terrified for his wife; who, on her part, was no leſs agitated by her violent apprehenſions on account of her huſband. He induſtriouſly prepares her a bed of leaves, and ſpreading over them a part of his clothes, invites her to taſte the ſweets of repoſe.—Alas.—Alas! what repoſe in ſo diſ-

mal

mal a dwelling, tortured by the ideas arifing from their dreadful ſituation!

It was neceſſary in the mean time that her two companions in miſery ſhould endeavour to procure ſome food. Nature, like a tender mother, watching over us in our greateſt diſtreſs, conſtantly pours her benefits upon us: —Can it be credited? The Counteſs was unable to refrain from ſleep.

Warbeck and Aſtley determined immediately to kill their horſes, dreading, if they ſet them at liberty, they might lead to a diſcovery of their retreat. With many tears they performed this cruel, but indiſpenſable act of ſelf-preſervation, and buried thoſe noble animals in the cavern. Aſtley takes upon himſelf the care of providing againſt the calls of hunger, which now began to preſs them, and prevails upon Warbeck to remain with the Counteſs.

She ſlept profoundly: her huſband fixed his eyes on her in deep attention. What images ariſe in his mind, and pierce his ſoul! He ſees before him a woman deſcended from an illuſtrious race of kings, as beautiful as ſhe was virtuous, equally tender and courageous; whom he had baſely deceived; and, in return for ſo much love, had brought her to ſuch an exceſs of adverſity as was not to be paralelled. What atonement could he now make for the injuries he had accumulated on the head of ſo much perfection? Was it ſufficient

ficient to deprive himſelf of life? Should he bury the poignard in his heart, would it expiate his crime? Could his death afford any comfort to the Counteſs, in the deplorable ſtate to which he had brought her? Alas! ſo far from alleviating the horrors of her deſtiny, his deſtruction would ſerve only to render it ſtill more dreadful. Endure life then for the ſake of that beloved woman, to conduct her from this dreary habitation, the image of the grave, and to place her in a ſituation far removed from all apprehenſion of danger. If the precious life of one ſo dear can but be ſecured, it will then be the ſeaſon for puniſhing, or rather for delivering himſelf from ſo many evils, by ending an exiſtence which will only become more inſupportable.

Such were the ſad reflexions which preyed on the mind of Warbeck, while he gazed in ſilence on the ſleeping Counteſs.—She awakes, and, opening her arms to embrace him, thus addreſſes him: Oh! Warbeck, if I had nothing to fear for thy life, I ſhould prefer this dark cave, inhabited by thee, before all the palaces I might claim in Scotland. Alas! will there be no period to our ſorrows? You weep: dear huſband, do not increaſe our affliction. To what, alas! has love reduced us! But where is Aſtley?—Warbeck informs her of the cauſe of his abſence, not doubting of his ſpeedy return.

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The hours fly fwiftly away; Aſtley appears not; they begin to be alarmed: their hunger increaſes as their fears augment. The day declines; night approaches. Warbeck frequently advances to the entrance of the cave: an univerſal ſilence prevails: abandoned by all, he returns to his wife, and with a wildneſs in his air, thus vents his complaints: —Henry will not be our executioner; famine will ſhortly terminate our exiſtence: my friend returns no more: he is fallen, alas! into the hands of our inſatiable enemies! he is incapable of betraying us.———He is dead whilſt we, in this dreadful ſolitude, this ſepulchre, muſt ſoon be conſumed by a death the moſt terrible of all!—Can I ſee thee fainting, waſting, expiring! I will ſurrender myſelf to the tyrant; let him take my life, provided your's be ſpared!

Warbeck aſcends again, and advances a little in the foreſt, whence he brings a few roots to the Counteſs, ſcarcely able to articulate theſe pathetic expreſſions: Behold the food that Warbeck offers to the Counteſs of Huntley.

He now reſolved to run all riſks, rather than expoſe his wife any longer to the horrors of ſo perverſe a deſtiny. With this deſign he had reached the extremity of the foreſt, when he meets a man in the habit and appearance of a beggar. Seeing no other perſon near them, Warbeck laid his hand to his

his ſword, when a well-known voice checks his intention:—What would you do? deprive a friend of life! Examine me well.—Oh! Heaven, is it Aſtley? What has detained thee?—Let us fly to our aſylum; when we are arrived I will ſatisfy thy curioſity: at preſent make uſe of what I have provided. Then opening a cloak-bag he diſplays ſeveral loaves and other proviſions. They haſten with great eagerneſs to the cavern.—Warbeck now repeats to his wife, hunger will not for this time occaſion our deaths.

Very different however is their repaſt from what the pomp and luxury of the Scottiſh court had formerly prepared for them. The diſguiſe of Aſtley excites the curioſity of his two companions; he informs them of the motives of it. Upon leaving his ſubterraneous habitation his intention was to ſeek ſome cottage, remote from any beaten road, to procure a ſupply of food: he perceived at a ſmall diſtance a man whoſe outward appearance indicated extreme poverty. Inſtantly forming a project which might be uſeful to their views he ſtripped himſelf of his clothes, and buried them under the leaves which had fallen in plenty; then, meeting the poor man, he complained to him that he had been robbed in the foreſt. Theſe three pieces of gold however, added he, which I had concealed, are ſtill left me: I give them to you in exchange for your hat and the old cloak, which

which I ſee is your whole covering. The poor man joyfully agreed to the bargain. With the help of this metamorphoſis, purſued Aſtley, I deceived the ſpies of our enemies, who I found were diſperſed in all the villages around: the avenues to the ſea are guarded with particular care; and a conſiderable reward is offered for diſcovering us. Arm yourſelves therefore with patience and intrepidity; be contented to continue here till the happy moment arrives, in which we may retire with ſafety, and open to ourſelves an aſylum in the Netherlands: in the mean time I will take care to provide for our ſubſiſtence. Alas! interrupted the Counteſs, my life will not long be a burthen to you. A flood of tears accompanied theſe deſponding words; but when ſhe turned her eyes upon her huſband, ſhe quickly changed her tone:—Let Fate ordain that we ſhould be buried together in this ſad dwelling, forgotten by Henry and the world, ſtill Warbeck, I can ſay to thee, thou art for ever dear to my heart! But forgive me; henceforth I will talk only of my conſtant affection; I will ſee nothing but my huſband. Oh! Warbeck, I have ſacrificed all for thee!

They dared not even venture to enjoy the light of the day, and it was with trembling ſteps that they hazarded ſometimes to breathe a purer air by night. I confeſs, ſaid Warbeck to his friend, if I were not alarmed for

a wife I adore, I ſhould think our preſent ſituation much leſs inſupportable. All the ambitious dreams which deluded my imagination are vaniſhed: it ſeems as though all nature had diſappeared from my ſight: here, in deep ſilence, my love alone engroſſes all my thoughts. Why, Aſtley, have I ſo many errors to reproach myſelf with? What are the charms of ambition, of human grandeur, attended with endleſs anxiety and perplexity? What, in a word, is a throne? Ah! let Henry only ceaſe to perſecute us; at leaſt let my wife have nothing to fear, and I would conſent to remain in this ſecret retreat the reſt of my life. What can I regret,—what deſire,---when I love, and am beloved again!

Several months had elapſed ſince they firſt inhabited this obſcure retirement. Aſtley alone had continued to pay frequent viſits to the neighbouring towns; and, favoured by his diſguiſe, eagerly liſtened to every converſation that might concern them.

One day he returned pale, terrified, and breathleſs:---We have been too happy; our retreat is ſuſpected; I fear it is diſcovered; from the diſcourſe I have heard it is not to be doubted. This night we muſt fly from it; and without ſtraying far from the foreſt, endeavour to gain the coaſt: Heaven, that has hitherto protected us, will not ſurely now forſake us! The Counteſs, almoſt fainting, ſinks into Warbeck's arms:---Still thou art purſued!

purſued! I imagined that in this place we ſhould find a grave. Muſt we ſeek for death elſewhere?

They wait till midnight had ſpread its thickeſt mantle over the earth. The Counteſs is unable to quit the cavern without ſhedding many a parting tear; ſhe would have preferred this habitation to a palace in her preſent circumſtances. They proceed on their way. At each ſtep the fears of the Counteſs are increaſed. But what terror ſeized them all, when their ears were aſſaulted with theſe tremendous ſentences:—Shall we never find them? Could we but once lay hands on them, we are aſſured of a reward well worthy our labour.—What words were theſe; what heart-rending ſounds! Eſpecially to the wife of Warbeck! Her blood froze in her veins.—They all threw themſelves on the ground, hardly daring to reſpire.

Hearing nothing farther for ſome time, they ariſe, and continue their flight. The firſt object which preſents itſelf to their ſight at the return of day is the ſea at a ſhort diſtance. Their ſpirits riſe at the welcome proſpect: their ſouls, ſuſpended between hope and fear, ſeemed, as it were, to float upon the waves. Afar off they perceive in imagination another country, another ſoil, the end of their ſufferings: but what tranſports warm their hearts when they behold the ſails of a ſhip riſing from the deep in the oppoſite horizon! Does

it advance towards the ſhore? Their looks, their wiſhes, their whole ſouls are now abſorbed by this intereſting object; the veſſel ploughs the waves in a line directly to the coaſt. Aſtley ſhouts aloud: We are ſaved! I diſtinguiſh the French flag. I will wait on the Captain; I will entreat him; his nation is not inſenſible . . . Be the price what it may —I will ſubmit our fate to his generoſity; he will receive us on board.—Aſtley haſtens to meet the ſhip.

Warbeck and his wife were unable to repreſs the tumults of their joy; they retire into the hollow of a rock, whence they continue to watch with eager eyes the motions of the veſſel, in expectation of Aſtley's return. He ſoon appears:—Come, ſaid he to the Counteſs, we have at length triumphed over our cruel deſtiny.—My friend, they wait for us—I will tell you—let us redouble our ſpeed!

Can fortune be weary of perſecuting Warbeck? They haſten their march; they fly; the Counteſs preceded them; ſhe has already one foot in the boat—a piercing cry cauſes her to turn her head: ſhe beholds (diſtracting ſight) her huſband diſarmed, and Aſtley defending himſelf againſt a number of ſoldiers. The ſailors endeavour to detain her, to ſave her from the fate which threatened her—in vain—ſhe darts from them—flies to the defence of her huſband; but has only ſtrength enough left to fall ſenſeleſs at his feet, while

he

he is loaded with fetters. He is conveyed to London, and re-committed to the Tower: his friend ſuffers the like fate; and the expiring Counteſs is conducted into the royal preſence.

Theſe thunder-ſtrokes ſucceeded each other more rapidly than can be deſcribed. The fears of Aſtley had been but too well founded: he was ſuſpected and followed; a party of ſoldiers, concealed behind an eminence, did not appear till they could ſeize their prey, at the moment when theſe unhappy wretches were on the point of delivering themſelves from their miſeries.

Henry meditated various projects of revenge. By his commands, Warbeck was about to ſuffer death: to this victim he even prepared to join the Counteſs of Huntley: ſlighted love abandons itſelf to the moſt ſevere reſentment. The wife of his enemy was in his power—before his eyes: but, if the ſtorms of jealouſy are ſo eaſily excited, they are calmed with equal facility. The firſt words which fall from the Counteſs are in favour of Warbeck:—Suſpend the dreadful ſtroke—be generous enough to ſpare my huſband—it was I who adviſed him to break his chains—it is I who have done all: I await my doom at your feet; but let not Warbeck be involved in the puniſhment which I alone deſerve. Can you refuſe me this favour? Will not my ſorrows penetrate your breaſt?

She

She had proſtrated herſelf at the feet of Henry, diſſolved in tears, her beautiful hair diſhevelled, her dreſs in that graceful negligence, which, while it indicated the extreme anguiſh of her mind, diſplayed to the admiring monarch the charms of her perſon in all its tranſcendant luſtre: never before did ſhe appear ſo attracting in his eyes: his looks are fixed on her; the furious monarch is ſoftened into the tender lover. This was the ſecond time he had experienced ſuch a revolution in his ſoul.—That your ſorrows ſhould affect me, replied he! Is it then the diſtant, cold term of compaſſion that you would beſtow on the ſentiments of my heart?—Cruel fair, thoſe ſentiments triumph over every thing I owe to you, to myſelf! Do you imagine my generoſity is exhauſted? Are you not convinced, by all I have done, that the tendereſt paſſion—Sire, if my huſband was condemned to the ſcaffold! Command that his life be ſpared, and—you ſhall know my whole heart; but his life is in danger.

The King inſtantly diſpatches an officer to the Tower, with orders to defer the execution of Warbeck. Then turning to the Counteſs:—You ſee, madam, the power you have over me!—my rival ſhall not die.—Shall he live? Ah! Sire—my gratitude—But deign to hear me; I ſpeak to a monarch worthy of the throne he poſſeſſes: What does you Majeſty require of me? I never felt the leaſt

tender

tender emotions, but for a man the moſt unpardonable, perhaps, with regard to me; yet the moſt deſerving of pity; at this moment I am blind to every thing beſides his miſery and our mutual affection: I will not deceive you; my love for him is even ſtronger than my duty. I confeſs that Warbeck has impoſed on me: I believed the object of my tender vows to be my equal in rank, to be the Duke of York; but Warbeck is my huſband; and the fatal paſſion with which I unhappily inſpired him, is the ſole cauſe of all thoſe errors which make him appear ſo criminal, and have plunged him into his preſent deplorable ſituation. Ah! Sire, if he were not dear to me; if I were not impelled by the affection I bear to him; would not his misfortunes alone induce me to regard him as a ſacred object?—I have already told you, I conſider myſelf no longer as Counteſs of Huntley; I am the wife of Warbeck: thence you will judge what we mutually owe each other. I am the victim of a contract which Heaven has witneſſed in the moſt ſolemn manner at the altar: this connection cannot be diſſolved by a deception, of which the moſt violent paſſion was the cauſe.—My eſteem, my admiration, the moſt lively gratitude, are the ſentiments to which I may lawfully abandon myſelf in your favour, and which time will improve.—Preſerve to me a huſband; grant him a pardon, which will manifeſt

niſeſt to the world the vaſt extent of your clemency. I repeat to you, that I alone induced him to break from his priſon; on my head therefore let your juſt indignation fall. ——Ah! can I injure you, madam! Doubtleſs I ought to forget you—to ſacrifice you to my revenge, to the intereſts of my kingdom—the intereſts of every ſovereign!—Muſt Warbeck then live, and be beloved! and think you that his preſence . . . Sire, let him be baniſhed far from my ſight—let me never enjoy his much-loved preſence—never—oh! hard condition! But ſpare his life—your Majeſty has promiſed it——and let me die in obſcurity, a prey to my tears, to my heart-breaking grief.—No; you ſhall behold him no more; you have abuſed my weakneſs: his life—is ſafe; I rely on the word of a King like you—But, madam, thoſe ſentiments . . . .

The arrival of an ambaſſador, who demands an immediate audience, interrupts this intereſting converſation. He is conducted to the foot of the throne, and preſents to Henry the letters of his ſovereign. The King ſpeaks to the Counteſs: Madam, the King of Scotland, touched with your calamities, preſſes you to return to his Court. Return to a country which has rejected me, and proſcribed my huſband, exclaimed the Counteſs! Ah! let not my ungrateful nation ever hope to ſee me again; forgotten by me, may

may it alſo forget me. I will ſeek ſome deſart, where I may freely weep for an unfortunate man, whoſe memory will be for ever dear to me, till exhauſted by my ſorrows, I find relief in death. Then, addreſſing herſelf to the ambaſſador: Your Sovereign is the author of all my misfortunes; I diſown his blood; I renounce my country—I am the moſt miſerable of women.—Leave me to my torments.

With theſe words ſhe quits the royal apartment, and, drowned in tears, ſeeks the faithful Sulton, who ſtill continued to employ every ſoothing art to alleviate the anguiſh of that unhappy Princeſs after her return.

The Lord Daubeney flattered the amorous monarch in his ill-grounded hopes. Henry believed that he ſhould at laſt accompliſh his wiſhes with regard to the Counteſs; thinking ſhe would ſoon forget her huſband when ſhe could no longer ſee him; and perſuading himſelf that kings, when they condeſcend to become lovers, are generally irreſiſtible.

Warbeck, ſhut up in the Tower, ſinking under the weight of his chains, tortured with the anguiſh of his laſt ſad diſaſter, yet lived, and lived only to love. That ruling paſſion revived his courage: he finds means to converſe with Aſtley. What a tender interview between thoſe ſuffering friends! After the moſt affectionate embraces, and intermingling

ling their tears, Warbeck ſays: It is not by tears, my friend, that we are to free ourſelves from theſe chains: we muſt conſult upon meaſures to regain our liberty, to eſcape from a ſtate of bondage worſe than death. I am ſeparated from my wife, and you know ſhe is all to the wretched Warbeck!—

Is it credible that the ſufferings of this unhappy man could yet be augmented! A priſoner, informed by a courtier lately confined, has the indiſcretion to mention to Warbeck the King's paſſion for the Counteſs. What poiſon to his vitals! what ſcorpions to his boſom! She is beloved! and by Henry! Aſtley, this is the laſt murdering ſtroke which Fortune had reſerved for me! She will forget me! ſhe loves me no more! ſhe loves the cruel . . . Aſtley, he wears a crown: I am Warbeck,—and in fetters. Oh! Heaven! what do I hear? Let us endeavour to fly from this deteſted place. If the Counteſs . . I feel myſelf cruel enough to ſacrifice her, and to pierce my own heart with a thouſand wounds on her panting boſom. No; never will I ſuffer any man on earth to rival me with impunity. I would throw all England into confuſion, ſacrifice Henry to my fury, revenge myſelf on all nature. I have imagined a new ſcheme: I am no longer the Duke of York; but I am able to reſtore that family to their ancient ſplendor, and replace the ſceptre in their hands. He

He entruſts his friend with a detail, which proved what powerful reſources this celebrated adventurer poſſeſſed in his mind. He conceives, in ſhort, the project of releaſing the true heir of the Plantagenets, the Earl of Warwick, from the confinement in which he had long languiſhed.

Never was a plot conducted with more ſagacity and ſecrecy. Warbeck had gained over four domeſtics of the Lord Digby, Lieutenant of the Tower. The plan was to aſſaſſinate that officer, ſeize the keys, and thus effect their eſcape with the Earl of Warwick. The latter, very unfit to act a principal character, lent only his name to ſo bold an enterpriſe; he was a phantom with which the intrepid Warbeck intended to ſhield himſelf. Thou ſhalt ſee, ſaid he to Aſtley, which of us is moſt worthy to poſſeſs a throne: the time will come when I ſhall aſcend it, ſupported only by my valour and my love. In the mean time I will preſent to the Engliſh the feeble Warwick, who ſhall ſmooth my path: he is an inſtrument neceſſary to my deſigns; when my auſpicious planet prevails I can eaſily reject him.—But let him reign, provided I am revenged. That Henry ſhould be my rival, and the Counteſs.... Aſtley, I have declared to thee, I will aſtoniſh the whole world.—To what, alas! does this gloomy jealouſy excite! Is it for me to entertain ſuſpicions! Ah! wretch, ſeek only to eſcape from this dreary priſon.

Warbeck

Warbeck ſucceeds to his wiſhes; he is freed from his fetters: however, he could not reach the life of Digby, though he believed he had eluded his vigilance. Already had Warbeck and his friend paſſed through ſeveral courts, followed by the timid Warwick; his daring leader arrives at the outer gate!—Digby, who was imagined to be aſleep, ſuddenly darts upon him at the head of the guards, before he could raiſe an arm in his defence. The Earl is led back to his priſon; Warbeck is dragged into the deepeſt dungeon, taking leave of his friend in theſe words: Adieu, my dear Aſtley; I ſee clearly I muſt renounce every hope—forgive and pity me—friendſhip is the cauſe of thy ruin.—I ought to be alone unhappy; and I involve all around me in one common dedruction!—The Counteſs—Aſtley could hear no farther.

The news is quickly ſpread, that Warbeck, having nearly accompliſhed his eſcape a ſecond time, is ſeized, and cannot now expect to avoid puniſhment. Henry had, in fact, pronounced his ſentence, and given poſitive orders that the Counteſs of Huntley ſhould not be admitted into his preſence, foreſeeing the conflicts he would have to ſuſtain with a wife in tears, reſolving at all events to rid himſelf of a man who preſumed to rival him both in his ambition and his love. Warbeck, though guilty in the eyes of juſtice and of reaſon, poſſeſſed nevertheleſs the greatneſs

of

of mind to conceal his accomplices: but Frion who was confronted with him at his trial, revealed every particular circumſtance of their connection: Warbeck, diſdaining to anſwer, regarded him only with a look of ſilent contempt.

A Flemiſh Lord demands an audience of the King, and thus addreſſes him: Sire, I am commanded by my Sovereign, the Ducheſs of Burgundy, to preſent your Majeſty this letter, which will ſufficiently prove that ſhe ſpeaks by me: you are acquainted with her writing. That Princeſs admits ſhe is your enemy, and that ſhe has tried every means to ruin you: ſhe owns that Warbeck is the work of her hands; by her he was trained up and armed againſt you: but ſhe believes you to be generous enough not to wreak your vengeance on the head of ſuch a victim: ſhe intreats your mercy in behalf of that miſerable youth.—Return to your miſtreſs, replies Henry, inflamed with rage, and tell her that Warbeck will have ceaſed to live when ſhe ſees you again; generoſity has its bounds: too long has her hatred purſued me; a juſt reſentment muſt for the future direct my conduct.

Margaret was not the only one who interceded in favour of Warbeck. As ſoon as the Counteſs of Huntley was informed of the recent diſaſter, which her huſband had met with, ſhe haſtened to find the King: the avenues to his apartments are ſhut againſt her;

even her letters are rejected. Henry was inexorable, and breathed nothing but death to Warbeck:—Paſſing however through the park his attention is excited by a tumultuous noiſe; he perceives a woman, with an air of diſtraction, ſtruggling with his guards, who endeavoured to oppoſe her acceſs to him. She falls at the King's feet, and drawing a poniard from her boſom, he diſcovers in her the Counteſs of Huntley:—Hear me, Sire, or this weapon ſhall end my miſeries in your ſight. Henry, yielding to his fears, or rather to his love, ſeizes himſelf the hand of the Counteſs, and diſarms her.——What, madam, is your requeſt?——That you behold my tears;—think not to prevent my death, if you have reſolved.—I read your deſire. It is in vain—the decree is pronounced—your ſolicitations will only incenſe me the more—Sire, you cannot, however, force me to bear this hateful burthen of life. Alas! you once told me I was unable to ſoften your heart.—(Henry orders his attendants to withdraw.) Doubtleſs, madam, you continue to reign in this heart, which your ingratitude drives to deſpair; but never hope to diſarm my juſtice.—Ought I to ſpare a mean adventurer, who has moſt audaciouſly preſumed to raiſe his eyes to my throne, to diſpute the crown with me; who is my rival—your huſband—beloved by you—Could you imagine—he ſhall pay for his fooliſh arrogance with his blood—I would refuſe

fuſe his pardon to all the ſovereigns of Europe.—Will you not deign, Sire, to grant it to me?—I die at your feet.—No more, madam, will I ſuffer myſelf to be overcome by ſentiments which I ought to conquer.—You have repulſed them with too much diſdain. —If I had been dear to you!—Ah! can you doubt it—you are dearer to me than ever! What do you intreat? You abuſe your power over me.—Sire, let him once more experience your generoſity.—Who, madam?—Can you aſk me who?—my huſband.—I admit his guilt: puniſh me for it; I will never ceaſe declaring, that it was for me he broke his chains, and ſtrove to raiſe up enemies againſt you.—Uninfluenced by love, he never would have committed this new offence. ——Let him then live, while I expire with grief. I will not riſe from your feet till I have obtained his pardon: I alone am guilty—yes my ſoul pierced . . . Would you be ſenſible of the value of my favours!—Ah! Sire, all that honour—but the time preſſes—give your orders—let the meſſengers fly to the Tower.

This time, however, Henry is inflexible: in vain the Counteſs implores; in vain ſhe embraces his knees. Yet, in the midſt of her ſighs and tears, the King imagines ſhe let fall a promiſe to yield to his deſires, on condition of his ſparing the life of Warbeck: he therefore diſpatches a meſſenger to the Tower to ſuſpend the fatal ſtroke. In the mean

time the monarch eſſays to talk of his paſſion to the Counteſs; ſhe hears him not, her whole ſoul being filled with anxiety for her huſband's deſtiny.

Ever ſince his laſt unfortunate adventure Warbeck had loſt all hope: he regarded death as the only haven for a life agitated by ſuch various ſtorms. But love aſſaults him with new emotions; a ſoldier for a conſiderable bribe, provides him materials for writing to his wife, and undertakes to deliver the letter into her own hands. We may be allowed to ſay, that in this letter Warbeck had poured out his whole ſoul: he had never before expreſſed himſelf with ſo much tenderneſs and energy. He repreſented the violence of his paſſion as the cauſe of all his errors, his crimes, and his misfortunes: he concluded by entreating pardon of his wife, aſſuring that he died in the perſuaſion of her love accompanying him to the grave. Some ſparks of jealouſy would nevertheleis intrude themſelves into the midſt of his tranſports.

He is now led to the ſcaffold prepared for his execution in one of the courts of the Tower. The firſt object which attracts his notice is the bleeding corpſe of his friend. He ſtarts back with horror at the ſight, and exclaims:——It is thus I have recompenſed the attachment and ſervices of the moſt faithful of friends! He ſtrives to embrace him; but is cruelly denied that laſt conſolation. He

aſcends

aſcends the ſcaffold with an air of compoſure, and drawing a portrait from his boſom, deſires the Lieutenant of the Tower, who attended his execution, not to ſuffer his eyes to be covered. Fear not, ſays he, turning to the executioner, to miſs your ſtroke: I know how to die.—Ah! dear Huntley! dear Huntley! then preſſing to his lips, and ſtedfaſtly fixing his eyes on the reſemblance of that beloved object, his head is ſevered from the trunk.

"Such (ſays Rapin) was the end of Warbeck, after having been acknowledged as a lawful Prince in Flanders, France, Ireland, Scotland, and England, and having made Henry tremble on his throne." *

Never did Fortune appear more in the light of an evil genius than in the caſe of Warbeck, whoſe ruin ſhe ſeemed to purſue with the moſt unrelenting cruelty. At the very inſtant that the axe had performed its fatal office, the meſſenger arrives with orders to ſuſpend the ſtroke.——Returning with the melancholy tidings, the Counteſs no ſooner eſpies him at a diſtance, than ſhe ſhrieks out:—— My huſband is dead!—Before he begins the recital, ſhe loſes the uſe of all her faculties. In this ſtate ſhe is conveyed to her apartment, and recovers in the arms of the tender Sulton, who

* Some Writers inſiſt that Warbeck was the real Duke of York; but Mr. Hume combats that opinion with the moſt convincing arguments; which may likewiſe ſerve to caution the enlightened Hiſtorian not to rely too implicitly on popular legends.

who bedewed her with her tears. The Counteſs could only articulate: He is no more!

A ſtranger deſires to be admitted to her: after ſome time ſhe yields to her entreaties: he preſents her a letter. To what new agitations does her grief expoſe her at ſight of the well known hand in the ſuperſcription:—It is from my huſband, ſhe exclaims, and haſtily breaks it open:—Sulton! it comes from Warbeck! Ah! my friend! to what exceſs did he love me!—But was he aſſured of the vaſt extent of my affection! Could he imagine, even for a moment, that my love was in the leaſt impaired! Ah! his life was ſo dear to me: it was little to ſacrifice my own life to ſave him.——Such was the force of my love, that, for his ſake—to ſave his precious life, I would have ſacrificed more—Warbeck was all to me!—But do I miſtake, Sulton? Is jealouſy blended with the tendereſt tranſports of love? Ah! Warbeck, that ſuſpicion has attended the to the grave! Why was I denied the privilege of joining my laſt ſighs with his? Forgive me, dear injured ſhade, for concealing from thee the ſentiments of a rival, which have doubtleſs contributed to thy fate. Couldſt thou not read to the bottom of my ſoul? By imparting to thee this hateful paſſion, I feared to increaſe thy anguiſh, which was already too——too excruciating. What monarch was able to ſurpaſs thee! Ah! Sulton, he expired with that thought, which rends my heart

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as though I had loſt him a ſecond time. Why, oh, Heaven! did I not purſue my former intention? I would have told him that Henry had dared to . . But I will fly from this deteſted palace: the bare idea of ſeeing Henry fills me with inexpreſſible torments, too great to be ſupported.---Let us ſeek a dwelling in the remoteſt part of the earth: let us find ſome cottage near that cavern, in which I paſſed the happieſt moments of my life: to me it ſhall be a ſcene of delight. There I ſhared the ſolitude and horror of the place with all I loved: ſecluded from the world, Warbeck was the univerſe to me: when tears flowed from my eyes, his tender, his beloved hand would dry them away.

It was no idle project conceived by this lady ſo worthy of compaſſion: ſhe preſents herſelf before the Queen, and conjures her to obtain the King's permiſſion for her retiring to ſome diſtant aſylum, where ſhe might languiſh out the ſhort remainder of thoſe days which her deplorable condition might leave her. The conſort of Henry is touched with her requeſt: the King long heſitates to yield to the preſſing ſolicitations of the Counteſs: at laſt he conſents to her departure, influenced, in ſome degree, by his new ſchemes of policy and avarice, * which diſputed with love

* The exceſſes into which Henry was hurried by this ſordid paſſion can never be too much reprobated. Sir William Capel, an Alderman of London, having declaimed too unguardedly againſt the rapacity and extortions of that Prince, was ſentenced to pay a fine of two thouſand pounds

the empire in his breaſt, and triumphed over a paſſion which was ever an unwelcome inmate there. True love demands the ſacrifice of every other paſſion; it may not improperly be called a ſort of religious worſhip (if we may preſume ſo far) which admits but of one ſole divinity.

The Counteſs quits the Engliſh court, attended by the Lady Skelton, and inhabits a retired houſe in the neighbourhood of the ſubterraneous retreat which had formerly concealed her huſband. Soon after her arrival, ſhe viſits the cave, ſeeks the footſteps of Warbeck, and fancies ſhe diſcovers them. There, ſaid ſhe to her friend, did he often ſtand, and accuſe himſelf of having rendered me unhappy—he, whoſe ſingle look created all my felicity. Here, he made a bed with his own hands; a little farther I ſee the ſtone on which he depoſited his armour.—I ſee him again; I embrace him in every part of this dreary abode, ſacred to misfortune! here ſhall be my temple—here my tomb! Often, in this

ſterling; a prodigious ſum in thoſe days. Empſon and Dudley, the inſtruments of theſe extortions, periſhed on the ſcaffold in the ſucceeding reign, as victims to divine and human vengeance. All the misfortunes, which afflicted England in the time of his ſucceſſor, may perhaps be aſcribed to that deteſtable avarice with which Henry was devoured: his reluctance to reſtore the marriage portion of Catharine, widow of his ſon Arthur, was the occaſion of her union with his ſecond ſon, afterwards Henry VIII. "At the approach of death" (as the excellent Author of the Elements of the Hiſtory of England judiciouſly obſerves) "this monarch believed he ſhould expiate his injuſtice by alms and charitable foundations, more proper ſometimes to deceive the conſcience than to appeaſe the ſovereign Judge."

ſolitary cave, did the Counteſs alone, with the aid of a glimmering taper, indulge herſelf in the melancholy pleaſure of reading over the laſt letter of Warbeck; which ſhe preſerved in her boſom, frequently preſſing it to her heart, and covering it with kiſſes and her tears.* There yet remain, would ſhe repeat, ſome pleaſures for the miſerable: I feel that my ſorrows are dear to me; and whoever attempts to alleviate them, would deprive me of the only ſatisfaction which I am now permitted to enjoy.

One day Sulton ſurpriſes her friend in a greater agitation of mind than uſual:—My dear Counteſs, is it poſſible that you can have met with any freſh cauſe of affliction;—I know not, my tender friend, whether I ſhould add to the murmurs I preſume to utter againſt providence, or whether I ought to return thanks to that gracious Power . . . I fancy that Warbeck will be born again to me.—Sulton is at a loſs to comprehend her meaning. At length the Counteſs diſcloſes her ſituation; indeed ſhe was no longer able to conceal it: ſhe was pregnant; and the child of Warbeck, was proſcribed even before he was born. It is not enough, ſaid the Counteſs, to be the moſt unhappy of wives; I ſhall be the moſt miſerable of mothers. Alas! what a gift have I to

* Father Orleans beſtows this remarkable panegyric on the Counteſs of Huntley: "She crowned all her other virtues by the conjugal affection which ſhe preſerved for her huſband, both in proſperity and adverſity."

I to make to the unfortunate creature that I feel already diſturbed within me!

The two friends carefully conceal the ſecret from all the world: the Counteſs is delivered in the cavern, attended only by Sulton. All her looks are now inceſſantly fixed on a ſon, whoſe growing features promiſe an exact reſemblance of his unfortunate father. In this obſcure dwelling, enlightened by a ſingle lamp, the infant begins the career of life, and ſheds his firſt tears; ſad preſage of the future deſtiny of man! the Counteſs enjoys all the pleaſures of a widowed mother: ſhe ſuckles her child, bathes him with her tears, repeating often:—Dear ſon, in thee I behold, I embrace thy unhappy father! Ah! what dreadful fate muſt attend thee, ſhould Henry even ſuſpect thy exiſtence! Art thou not enough an object of pity! Can they envy thee this diſmal abode, where thou haſt firſt ſeen the light, or rather where thou art doomed to ſuffer an everlaſting night? Let the tyrant reign, but leave me in the center of the earth to nouriſh thee with my tears: I aſk no more of kings, of men, or of heaven itſelf: a ſon is every thing to his mother.

The Counteſs was a ſtriking inſtance of this truth. England—the whole world, appeared no longer in her eyes but as a defaced picture which ſhe had ever baniſhed from her memory. She paſſed her days entirely in the cave: her child began to ſmile upon her—to liſp the tender

tender name of mother. Hearts poſſeſſed of ſenſibility, ye know the inexpreſſible charm annexed to that word, when pronounced by a mouth on which Nature ſeems to have impreſſed her moſt affecting characters!

It chanced, upon ſome occaſion, that this unfortunate lady had entruſted her friend, for a few minutes, with the care of her ſon. On her return to the cave, what a ſhocking ſpectacle ſtrikes her ſight! She beholds torches, arms, ſavage ſoldiers—the feeble ſhrieks of her ſon aſſault her ears--to her he ſtretches out his infant arms, while Sulton, preſſing him to her boſom, endeavours to ſave him from the hands of the ſoldiers,--who attempted to force him from her.--My child,--my child (exclaims the Counteſs,) you ſhall not tear him from me. —She ſprings with impetuoſity on the barbarians, who, deaf to her prayers and her ſighs, repulſe her with rudeneſs, and ſeize their prey. —You ſhall pierce my body with a thouſand wounds, or reſtore him to my arms--his cries penetrate my heart! Oh! my dear ſon!—— Cruel men! You have no children!

Too faithful to their truſt, theſe unfeeling ſoldiers were retiring: the Counteſs had fainted from the exceſs of her deſpair.—She recovers--ſhe riſes--and exerts herſelf to purſue the raviſhers--as a final effort, ſhe furiouſly ruſhes on him who held her child--the ſoldier unwarily oppoſes his weapon——the unfortunate Counteſs, blind to her danger, and aſpiring

piring only to reſcue her ſon, runs on the ſword---her blood flows apace. Sulton makes the cave reſound with her lamentations: ſhe flies to embrace her dying friend, who has barely ſtrength enough left to deſire, before ſhe breathes her laſt, to preſs her lips to thoſe of her ſon. Theſe hearts of ſteel are unable to reſtrain their pity: tears guſhed from every eye: they haſten to gratify the unhappy mother, who ſeizes her ſon with tranſport—preſſes him to her boſom—laviſhes on him a thouſand kiſſes—covers him with her tears, and with her blood—expires, ſtill holding him in her arms, and recommending him to the affection of Sulton.

This faithful friend accompanies the ſoldiers She learns that the King having received information, probably from ſome perfidious domeſtic, that there remained an heir to Warbeck, had ordered him to be ſeized and brought to him. The generous Sulton however obtained permiſſion from that monarch to inhabit the ſame houſe, in which the ſon of her friend was placed under a guard, and was never from his ſight till the hour of his death. Sulton had given directions for the interment of the Counteſs in the ſame cavern where ſhe expired. On the deceaſe of her ſon, ſhe re-viſits that ſubterraneous abode, and depoſits his precious relics in the ſame grave with the unfortunate Counteſs. A popular legend ſtill exiſts on the ſubject: It is pretended that a prodigy was remarked ſimilar to that which was ſuppoſed to have happened when Heloiſe was buried near her beloved Abelard;—the Counteſs is ſaid to have opened her arms to receive her ſon.—Sulton continued daily to weep over the tomb which ſhe cauſed to be erected to their memory. She ſoon after ſuffered the common lot of mortality, and was interred in the ſame place, by the ſide of her friend.

FINIS.

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